Policy implementation as a wicked problem: A study of the horse-world

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Preface

This thesis has presented several challenges, which resulted in submission taking longer than anticipated. I started this study in November 2006 with the data collection phase lasting from October 2007-December 2008, with follow-up interviews in 2010. The reason behind these delays despite the usual PhD student's experience of blood, sweat and tears in producing the final draft, is quite simple. In May 2007, I was diagnosed with a benign brain tumour. The onset of frequent headaches had been diagnosed as stress from a culmination of several personal life changes in a short period of time.

Life presented a choice; I could sit and worry about potential outcomes or decide to live well. I had a wonderful son, mother, and friends and as years of competitive sport taught me, most challenges in life are seventy percent psychological - a life lived well was my choice. What I did underestimate was the scale of the side-effects from the medication. In the first few months, I lost days because I was unable to stand until my body became accustomed to the medication. As a fitness enthusiast the 1:10 chance of heart valve failure was a difficult statistic to comprehend combined with constant tiredness, dizziness, and nausea. The impact of the side-effects also made thinking clearly and logically challenging at times. In addition, a series of operations commenced in 2007-April 2013. And, after a period of stabilisation, the medication was reduced, only for the tumour to re-grow in February 2011, while increasing in size from 2007.

By this time, I was employed by Durham University Business School. Another break from studying followed, as the medication was increased by two hundred percent and the combination of working full-time, parenthood and trying to complete this thesis was impossible. Moving forward to December 2012, the tumour stabilised while the medication remained high (to guard against re-growth), studies recommenced and submission followed in July 2013, at last.

Ironically, in sociological terms, I am a critical realist/complexity theorist as you will discover in this thesis. Despite the persistence of my tumour, as I do not have an external label, most people are shocked to discover its existence. This I put down to the choice to live well, continue working, keep fit, and overcoming obstacles to completion with the care and support of those closest to me including equines (providing therapy at all times). And most importantly, showing my son that you can achieve most things in life with determination and strength of mind, challenges are seventy percent psychological and thirty percent physical - literally blood, sweat, and tears.

To conclude, within Durham University there are many people to thank and most are listed in the acknowledgments. The University has supported this thesis through to completion and for that, I will always be grateful. I am thankful that my tumour is benign and I can continue with my philosophical motto "live well, love much, and laugh often" because you never know what will happen next.

Abstract

The British Horse Industry Confederation and Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (2005) *Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales (Strategy)* expresses an ambitious vision to transform the traditional horse-world into a horse industry by 2015. The Horse Strategy calls for *all* equestrians to become stakeholders, responsible for implementing its central aims of increasing grassroots participation and encouraging engagement with the Horse Strategy. Since 2005, little is known about stakeholders' experiences of the implementation process or what degree of progress has been made towards creating the horse industry. Given the complex number of groups involved each with their own sets of interests and motives to engage with the horse-world, it is expected that implementation of the Horse Strategy forms a complex wicked problem that is unforeseen and poorly treated.

This thesis explores regional representatives, local authority council policy officers and grassroots equestrians' experiences of implementing the Horse Strategy. A qualitative analysis of 59 (male and female) semi-structured interviews, diaries (33 adults and 27 children) and profiles, participant and nonparticipant observation, and documentary analysis of equine-related policies and articles is carried out. Sport England's (2004) Framework for Sport was used to gain an understanding of what factors influence an individual's choice to participate in equestrianism, and the CLEAR Framework diagnostic tool (Lowndes *et al.,* 2006) was adopted to assess equestrians' engagement with the Strategy.

Interrelated factors were found to influence an individual's choice to participate in grassroots equestrianism and these synergistically built on each other to increase participation. The notion of a 'hook' or bond with a horse emerged as the most influential factor. However, each group showed considerable competing vested interests that led to fragmentation of the horse-world, giving rise to implementation barriers, deficits, and inertia. Even if a shared language can be established around the icon of the horse to increase participation, problems remain in addressing resourcing, cost, and infrastructure constraints. An overarching complex wicked policy problem emerged as the vested interests among different equestrian groups served to constrain and hinder the policy implementation process. This thesis concludes by providing recommendations to the BHIC and Defra, policy officers, regional representatives and grassroots proprietors to increase participation and encourage engagement with policy at local-level.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following organisations and people who have contributed to the completion of this thesis.

This project was jointly funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), I am grateful to both these organisations for their support. A special degree of thanks goes to my supervisors Helen Charnley and Dr Martin Roderick, with encouragement and support from Prof. Ian Stone, Dr Ad van den Oord, Dr Mat Hughes, Dr Dave Robson, and to Prof. David Byrne who first encouraged me to undertake a PhD. Their contributions reflect more than encouragement and knowledge, rather supporting progress during unusual personal circumstances throughout the writing stage of the study. The securing of funding and guidance offered by Dr Sam Hillyard has been appreciated and provided the motivation to complete this thesis.

This research would have been impossible without the help and enthusiasm shown by all the participants. From local authority policy officers through to equestrians and equines, free unconditional access was granted to sharing their experiences of equestrianism, allowing a unique insight into equestrian participation and implementing policy at local-level.

I am very grateful to my fellow doctoral students for their encouragement, support, companionship, memories and lasting friendship: Dr Lakshika Liyanage, Dr Mae Yang and Dr Edson Munsaka.

Finally, a very special mention for the following family, friends, and equines, without which, this thesis would not have been remotely possible. First, I owe a very special and overwhelming debt of gratitude to my mother, Anne, and son, Owen. Second, to my friends: Joan, Colin, John, Mat, Jen, Kathryn, Paul, Min, Emma, Carolyn, Elly, Beverley, Liz, Jane, Martyn, Alan, Anna-Lena, Rachel, and Louise. Equines: Ossian, Ajax, Beblo, Jurgen, Truffle, Romeo, Luna, Juno, and Jethro. This thesis is also dedicated to the memory of John Elliott and Diane Dodsworth who played central roles in encouraging my aspirations and life-long passion for everything equine.

"There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man... Young men have often been ruined through owning horses, or through backing them, but never through riding them: unless of course they break their necks, which, taken at a gallop, is a very good death to die"

Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

"A canter is the cure for every evil"

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881)

Declaration and Statement of Copyright

The contents of this thesis are produced solely for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University and consist of the author's original individual contributions with appropriate recognition of any references being indicated throughout.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

2. PARTICIPATION IN EQUESTRIANISM

3. ENGAGING EQUESTRIANS WITH THE HORSE STRATEGY

4. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY OFFICERS

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: GRASSROOTS EQUESTRIANISM

7. CONCLUSION

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

ABRS	-	Association of British Riding Schools
APS	-	Active People Survey (Sport England)
BD	-	British Dressage
BE	-	British Eventing
BEF	-	British Equestrian Federation
BETA	-	British Equestrian Trade Association
BEVA	-	British Equine Veterinary Association
BHA	-	British Horseracing Authority
BHB	-	British Horseracing Board
BHIC	-	British Horse Industry Confederation
BHS	-	British Horse Society
BHTDA	-	British Horse Trails Driving Association
BSJA	-	British Show Jumping Association
BSPS	-	British Show Pony Society
Defra	-	Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs
End GB	-	Endurance Riding - Great Britain
FEI	-	Fédération Equestre International or International Equestrian Federation.
LANTRA	-	Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries.
NEWC	-	National Equine Welfare Council
NGB	-	National Governing Body
PC	-	The Pony Club
PSHP	-	Performance Sport Horses and Ponies
TBA	-	Thoroughbred Breeders Association
WFW	-	World Horse Welfare (formerly, the International League for the Protection of Horses - ILPH).

Glossary

Horse Strategy/Strategy	-	The policy document (BHIC, 2005)
Industry leaders	-	British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Horse-industry	-	The proposed organisational structure created by the transformation of the horse-world by implementing the Horse Strategy.
Horse-world	-	A hierarchical organisational structure including professional and grassroots riders, representative bodies (for different interest groups), associated businesses (riding centres, livery yards, etc.) and activities (equestrianism – see below).
Leisure-sector	-	The grassroots activities of the horse-world which will be transformed into this sector of the new horse-industry
Equestrianism	-	A broad definition to reflect the diverse range of horse-related activities available in the horse-world. For example, horse-riding, reining, show jumping, eventing, dressage, polo, horseball, gymkhanas, competitions and so forth.
Grassroots equestrianism/ equestrians	-	Local-level participants and activities.
Policy Officers	-	Local authority Rights of Way Improvement Officers
Regional Representatives	-	BEF, BHS, ABRS and WHW employees
Rural economy	-	Local economy relative to land-based activities previously synonymous with agriculture.
Macro	-	National level – policy makers and BHIC and Defra
Meso	-	Middle level – policy officers and regional representatives
Micro	-	Local level – grassroots participation, riding centres

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background

If the question was posed to an individual "what is the horse-industry in the UK," the likelihood is that the answer would refer to horse-racing. Horse-racing historically links horses and British culture (Cassidy, 2002, 2007). However, towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the gradual replacement of horses with automotive power within agricultural, transportation and military contexts led to a marked rise in the recreational use of horses during the 1920's (Clutton-Brock, 1992 , DiMarco, 2008). Equestrian activities became more widespread with participation broadening from the male dominated activities in agriculture, transport and the military, to include children, young people, and females (DiMarco, 2008 , Kelekna, 2009). Organised equestrian bodies began to form in response to the demand for activities and the 'horse-world' as we know it today, emerged (Buxton, 1994 , Pony Club, 2008). While the horse-world developed to include professional and grassroots or leisure riders participating in equestrianism, it remained in the shadow of horse-racing in terms of media coverage, public profile and its contribution to the economy (HCR, 2004). In 1999, the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) was created and recognised that the horse-world and horse-racing collectively could potentially form one unified industry and more importantly, a unified voice to lobby government on equine-related issues (BHIC, 2006).

1.1.1 The development of the Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales (BHIC, 2005)

Prior to the decline of agriculture, the government paid little interest to the horse-world in terms of governing, regulation, participants, and its contribution to the "rural economy"[1] (Bacon, 2002b: 2). From the 1960's onwards, the dominance of land-based businesses contribution to the rural economy underwent an occupational and demographical shift (Marsden *et al.*, 1990 , Murdoch *et al.*, 2003). Rural areas attracted new residents and "in-migrant entrepreneurs" (Ward, 2006: 13). This group brought with it capital to invest in

[1] See glossary for a full definition

rural-based service and manufacturing businesses alongside the more traditional land-based roles (Winter and Rushbrook, 2003: 2). The importance of diversity within the rural economy is put into context when on average agriculture accounted for only 2.6 percent of the rural workforce generating approximately 0.8 percent of the UK's Gross Value Added figure (GVA) (Defra., 2005). The horse-world therefore came into focus as a contributor to the rural economy. From 2000-2004, the relationship between the BHIC and Defra and "Government… developed markedly" producing a "working partnership" (BHIC, 2005: 6). And, in 2004, the Henley Centre Report (HCR), was commissioned by the BHIC and Defra to inform the development of the Horse Strategy, and provided insights into i) who participates in equestrianism and why; ii) the economic value of the horse-world, and iii) the potential for transforming the horse-world into a horse-industry over the following decade.

In 2005, the Horse Strategy (BHIC, 2005) emerged under the "New Labour" government which "placed great emphasis on joined-up policy and solutions, where partnership and collaboration are dominant themes" (Haynes, 2003: 14).

This approach was reflected within the Ministerial Foreword of the Horse Strategy:

> "Government recognise the major contribution which the horse industry [horse-world] makes to the economy, and the important role that horses play in the lives of so many people in both the cities and rural areas across England and Wales. Moreover, Government shares with the British Horse Industry Confederation a strong conviction that the industry has the potential to develop further and to contribute even more"
>
> (BHIC, 2005: 6)

The Strategy consisted of eight, broad ranging aims to:

1. **Bring the Horse Industry together and develop its national, regional and local impact** [addresses communication, fragmentation and cultural issues].
2. **Increase participation in equestrianism and develop the social contribution of the Horse Industry** [addresses developing grassroots equestrianism].

3. **Boost the economic performance of equestrian businesses** [addresses the efficiency of riding centres to re-invest profits and subsequently increase participation].
4. **Raise equestrian skills, training and standards.**
5. **Increase access to off-road riding and carriage driving.**
6. **Consider the environmental impact of the horse.**
7. **Encourage sporting excellence.**
8. **Improve the quality and breeding of horses and ponies.**

(BHIC, 2005: 11-17)

Of these, the first three had been identified in the Henley Centre Report as being fundamental to successful implementation of the Strategy. This thesis focuses on these three aims through a study of the experiences of local authority policy officers, representatives of equine organisations, grassroots proprietors, staff and equestrians in four riding centres in the North East of England.

1.1.2 Researcher position

When the opportunity arose at Durham University to study equestrianism, I already had an appreciation of the horse-world, as a grassroots equestrian and a sense of the tensions that could arise in transforming the horse-world into an industry. I perceive my familiarity with the subject area to be an advantage. In short, I have been part of the horse-world as a paying customer, volunteer, competitive rider, spectator, and paid employee for over thirty years. This insight combined with a postgraduate degree in Research Methods meant that I was both familiar with the research area (Becker, 1998) and acutely aware of the demands of conducting a valid study (Bryman, 2004). This presented an opportunity to combine two passions – equestrianism and research and to make a contribution to understanding grassroots involvement in equestrianism and how this can be used to inform policy.

1.1.3 Terminology

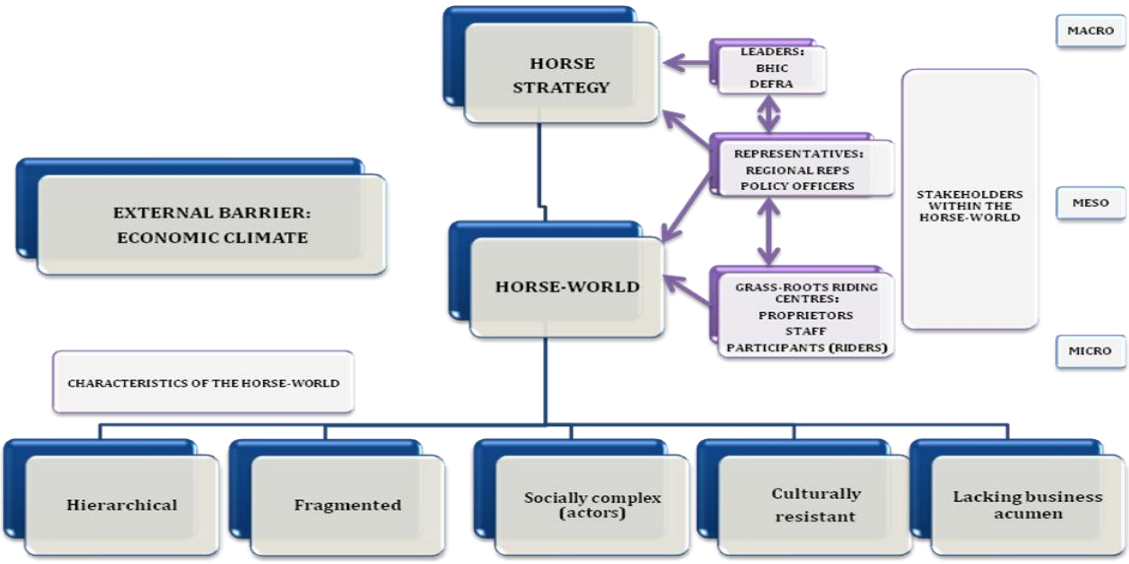
Before moving on to discuss 'the research problem' it is appropriate to clarify the terminology I use throughout the thesis. The 'horse-world' refers to a complex set of actors who are related, in diverse ways, to horses through spectating, riding, owning, breeding, etc. This 'horse-world' has been described (HCR, 2004)

as hierarchical, fragmented, socially complex, culturally resistant and lacking business acumen. 'Grassroots' refers to equestrian participants and policy stakeholders at the local or 'micro' level of the horse-world (BHIC, 2005: 11, 29, 85, HCR, 2004: 4, 7, 57). 'Equestrianism' describes the diverse range of equine-based activities which take place at grassroots level and within the horse-world. 'BHIC and Defra' are the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

1.2 The research problem

The overall research problem is depicted in Figure 1.1. Implementing the first three aims of the Horse Strategy presents two clear challenges; i) increasing participation in equestrianism and ii) engaging grassroots stakeholders with the aims of the Strategy and the necessary communication to achieve the envisaged transformation to a Horse Industry (BHIC, 2005). A major barrier is the lack of consensus among equestrians about the conceptualisation of the horse-world as a horse-industry as well as "discontent at the 'grassroots' level with regard to the 'representativeness' of some of the national bodies" (HCR, 2004: 57) . This fragmentation creates barriers to communication between stakeholders (HCR, 2004: 3, 66) and, more importantly, as the Henley Centre Report (2004: 66) warned, stakeholder trust and cooperation "is the essential underpinning of any industry strategy and without it, successful strategic implementation is impossible".

Figure 1.1: The research problem – the implementation of the Horse Strategy

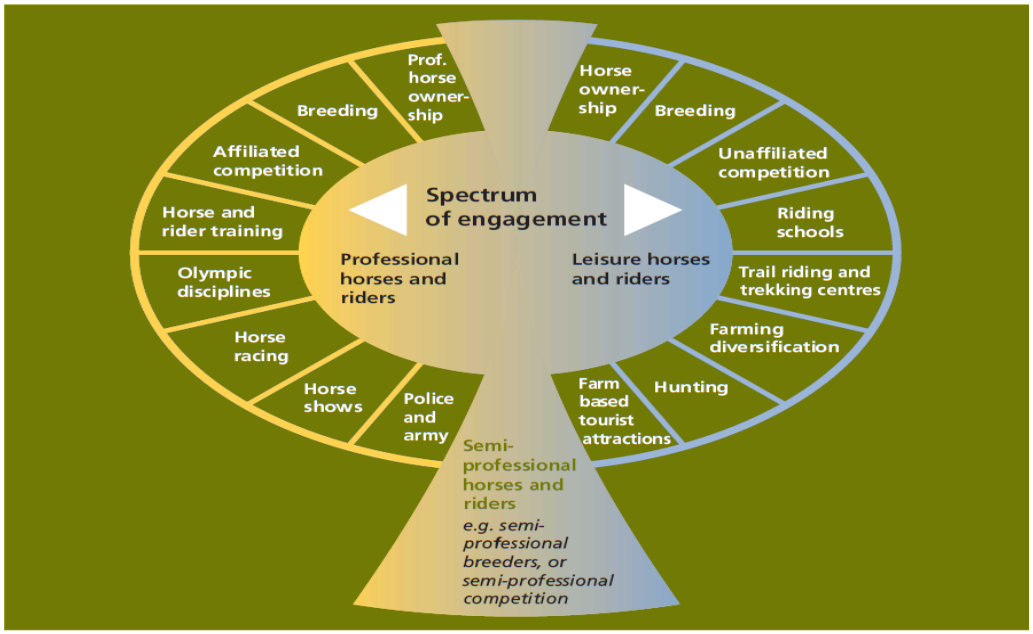


The Henley Centre Report recommended the creation of sustainable communication networks to address the first aim of the Horse Strategy (HCR, 2004: 4, 10). Improved communication networks would "join up" the "grassroots" and "top tier" of the horse-world (HCR, 2004: 10) by establishing relationships between riding centres and representative organisations such as the British Equestrian Federation (BEF)[2].

Figure 1.2, focusing on the micro-level of the horse-world and illustrating the spectrum of engagement, shows the diversity of horses, equestrians and activities involved. The focus of this thesis, grassroots riding schools or centres, lies within the leisure-sector of this spectrum and have been described by the BHIC (2005: 32) as "the bedrock" of the proposed horse-industry in terms of "creating and maintaining mass participation" in equestrianism.

[2] National Governing Body for Equestrianism

Figure 1.2: A conceptual map of the spectrum of engagement (HCR, 2004: 10).



The Horse Strategy calls for all equestrians to unite and take responsibility for ensuring its successful implementation over the following decade 2005-2105 (BHIC, 2005: 6). Key questions here relate to understanding i) the factors that encourage, and barriers that limit, participation in equestrianism and ii) grassroots equestrians awareness of, and engagement with, the Horse Strategy.

1.3 Aims of the research

With these questions in mind: increasing participation and facilitating the engagement of equestrians with the Horse Strategy, the aims of this study are to shed light on:

- why individuals participate in grassroots equestrianism;
- the barriers to participation;
- awareness of the Horse Strategy among grassroots equestrians;
- ways of facilitating engagement with the Strategy.

These aims form the basis of the following research questions that inform the review of conceptual and theoretical literature and the empirical study that follows:

1. What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?
2. What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?
3. To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?
4. How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, chapter 2 explores the literature with relevance for participation in equestrianism, drawing on insights from the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b). Chapter 3, focusing on policy implementation literature, draws on the conceptual and theoretical insights of Lowndes *et al* (2006a) on policy engagement at the local level, Alford (1975) on structural interests, Lipsky (1980) on street level bureaucracy and Rittel and Webber (1973) on the nature of policy as "wicked problems" that present challenges defying easy solutions with additional insights from complexity theory (Byrne, 1998 , Haynes, 2003). In Chapter 4, I set out the design of the empirical study, articulating and reflecting on the methodological considerations, methods of data collection, management and analysis, and ethical considerations in undertaking this research. Chapters 5 and 6 present critical analyses of the study findings in the light of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks articulated in the earlier reviews of the literature. Both chapters include discussion of all four research questions, chapter 5 focusing on the perspectives and insights of representatives of equine organisations and local authority policy officers, while chapter 6 focuses on the world of grassroots equestrians: riding centre proprietors, staff and riders. In chapter 7, I draw the thesis to a conclusion, revisiting the key findings in relation to each research question before identifying the original contributions of the thesis. I discuss the limitations of the study before making recommendations for policy makers, and those charged with policy implementation as well as identifying areas for future research.

2. Participation in Equestrianism

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the first challenge of the Horse Strategy: increasing participation in equestrianism. I start by discussing the background to participation in horse-related activities, and briefly raise the difficulties of measuring and promoting participation. Next, the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) is reviewed and the studies informing its design explored. In addition, I consider the literature on sport participation, in order to gain an overview of this field and assess if the Framework for Sport's drivers are appropriate in explaining the reasons to participate in equestrianism. Based on an emergent set of determinants from the literature, I investigate the equestrian literature to identify similarities between sports in general and grassroots equestrianism in particular. The chapter concludes by reviewing research evaluating grassroots equestrianism and barriers to increasing participation.

2.1.1 Background to participation in equestrianism

Animal domestication began over 12,000 years ago and continues today as humans and animals coexist, interact, and profoundly influence each other's social space (Knight, 2005 , Myers, 2007 , Podberscek *et al.*, 2000). In terms of the horse, there are significant differences to other domestic breeds. First, the horses ability to carry man gave rise to mobility, power, and the capacity to explore greater distances for many cultures and societies (Atwood-Lawrence, 1985 , Clutton-Brock, 1992). Second, the horse became "important economically, socially, culturally and personally" as the emotional affect of the bond between horse and rider has led to "narrators of all ages call[ing] the horse a friend" (Leinonen, 2009: 9). Finally, the domestication of the horse has shaped the history of man and without it, civilisations would have evolved differently (Cassidy, 2002 , DiMarco, 2008 , Soave, 2000: 8-10).

As modern society developed, the horse gave way to automation within the cavalry, agriculture and transport industries, yet the name is retained in the measurement of automation – 'horsepower'. Despite this change of role and

social re-positioning, few studies have examined human-horse relationships or the persistence of equestrianism in contemporary society (Richards, 2006 , Robinson, 1999). Yet, the Horse Strategy includes developing an understanding of equestrian activity in order to achieve an increase in equestrian participation.

Before reviewing the sports participation literature, I provide a brief overview and context surrounding the difficulties in defining grassroots equestrian participation. The term grassroots is used here to denote participation in equestrian activities outside the professional level from hacking (riding in the countryside) through to spectating at equestrian events to hunting.

2.2 Participation in grassroots equestrianism

The horse-world structure has been recognised as "fragmented" (HCR, 2004) which has confounded the task of establishing equestrian participation rates in professional and grassroots equestrianism. Prior to the publication of the Henley Centre Report (2004) in the UK, the most accurate participation data was published as part of the National Equestrian Survey (NES) (BETA[3], 1999). BETA (1999) estimated that approximately four percent of the population regularly participated in horse riding and equestrianism (participating at least once a month). This overview disguised the varied nature of participation and participants - many equestrians ride, but do not own a horse or ride infrequently. There are multiple reasons for keeping a horse: competition, breeding, hunting or leisure purposes. And different methods of stabling are available: livery[4] yards, riding centres, and own property. It is possible that a single establishment can accommodate all these functions, possibly with the addition of breeding and training (BETA, 1999: 5-6). But as the National Equestrian Database (Suggett, 2008) was not launched until 2008, the lack of a database to capture

[3] British Equestrian Trade Association.
[4] The care of horses for a fee.

participation rates has compounded the difficulty in knowing the actual number of horses and equestrian participants in the UK.

Several recurrent factors and issues emerged, in understanding who are equestrians and why do they participate in equestrianism. This raises questions for the implementation of the Horse Strategy, in particular, its aim to increase participation. One challenge concerns the image and public understanding of equestrianism. First, that equestrianism remains "elitist" with respect to who takes part (upper classes) and where activities take place (rural areas) impacting on the appeal of equestrianism to the wider public (Dashper, 2011 , HCR, 2004: 56-7, Robinson, 1999: 42-45). Second, horse riding is associated with the possibility of serious, or even fatal injuries (Silver, 2002), which has been argued as creating a possible barrier to increasing participation (Meikle, 2006). The former drug czar, David Nutt (2009) in arguing that the risks of drug use were exaggerated, described participation in equestrianism as exceeding the dangers posed in taking the Class "A" drug, ecstasy and argued that equestrians become "addicted" to the feeling they derive from horse riding. Horse riding's "harmful consequences" include potential death, road traffic accidents and "violent conduct" exemplified, he claimed, by protestors behaviour in opposing the government's introduction of a hunting ban (Nutt, 2009: 4). Despite the controversy surrounding Nutt's claims, within the horse-world, the lack of evidence to refute these allegations highlighted the "gap" in knowledge surrounding the allure of equestrianism given these risks (News, 2009 , White, 2009). Following the impact of this negative publicity and a series of deaths from rotational falls (the horse lands on the rider) in "eventing" (2009-10), the horse-world instigated measures to "increase rider safety" in order to maintain and encourage equestrian participation (White, 2010).

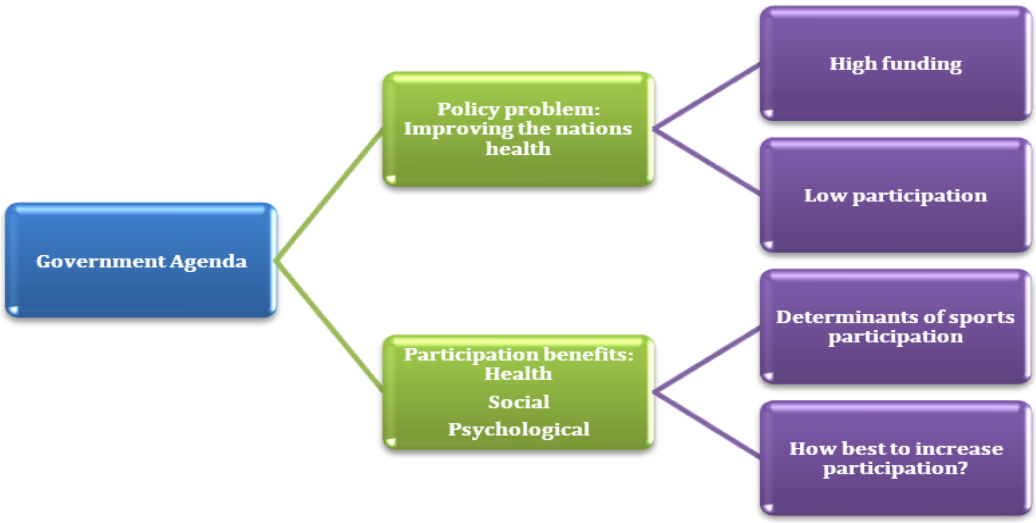
The question of 'why' people choose to participate in equestrianism, despite its risks, is complex. In explaining this question, I start by drawing on literature that

addresses questions of participation in sport. This field is widely researched and debated, examining complex interactions between a diverse range of interdependent variables that influence an individual's choice to participate in sport (Downward and Burgham, 2005 , Farrell and Shields, 2002 , Fox and Richards, 2004). In the following section, I review recent government policy and research on the determinants of sports participation, and how best to increase sports participation in the UK. Equestrianism is included in the government sport policy agenda because of the perceived health benefits it provides as a form of physical activity.

2.3 Understanding participation in sport

Increasing mass sports participation has formed part of New Labour's modernising health agenda, linked to the reduction of chronic disease (DCMS, 2002 , Department of Health., 2004). Several studies were commissioned by Sport England, the government sports agency, to investigate how to enable the nation to become more physically active and thereby more healthy. Figure 2.1 below represents the challenge of increasing participation in sport drawing on the work of Rowe *et al.,* (2004), Kay (2004), Ravenscroft (1996, 2004) and Elson (2004).

Figure 2.1: Participation in sport



Seeking to identify "where we have been", "where we are now" and "where we would like to get to" for sports participation, physical activity and health benefit trends in society, Rowe *et al.,* (2004:6) reviewed sports participation survey data[5]. What they found was that despite sustained Government investment in a series of sports policies spanning two decades (1980s and 1990s), levels of sports participation "remained broadly unchanged" and continued to be defined through "social inequities" (Rowe *et al.*, 2004: 7). Primary factors determining participation were age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, income, and social class. Further studies focused on the contribution of specific factors influencing sports participation - the family (Kay, 2004), the provision of sports facilities (Ravenscroft, 2004) and the countryside as a venue for sport (Elson, 2004).

2.3.1 The family

Kay (2004: 53-54) explored the role of "family" in influencing sports participation in children via "socialisation", practical "support", and "differentiating the role of sport" within the family unit. She found that "family" influence on the decision to participate in sport was linked with social class,

[5] General Household Survey, Allied Dunbar Fitness Survey, Henley Centre Report on sports engagement and Sport England annual surveys.

gender and ethnicity (Kay, 2004: 53). Children from white, middle-class families were more likely to view sporting activities positively, participate more often and achieve higher performance, based on the value their parents placed on sports participation. As a result Kay (2004: 54) recommended that the role of the "family" should be recognised explicitly and become a standard variable in sports participation research. She suggested differentiating between "household (one- or two-parent household), family work status (number of earners), and social class (parental occupation or education level)" as sports determinants, in order to provide clearer insight into the role of family within the family-sport relationship and its subsequent influence on sports participation (Kay, 2004: 54).

2.3.2 The provision of facilities

A series of studies, (Ravenscroft, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1998) examined supply-side determinants of participation including access to sporting facilities, as well as the management and/or delivery of services at local-level. Ravenscroft found that local authorities had adopted the role of "enablers" of sports participation rather than taking direct responsibility for delivery, for example, creating partnerships between schools, Trusts and county sports clubs in an attempt to improve "grassroots" participation rates (Ravenscroft, 2004: 123). Tracking the construction of sports participation policy through successive governments, Ravenscroft showed that under the conservative government of the 1990s sports policies centred on factors to increase "access to facilities and services" which were intended to improve access to sport for 'hard to reach groups' in society (Ravenscroft, 1991). During the transition from conservative to New Labour governments, a distinct shift occurred from "universalism" (sport for all) to placing an onus on individuals to take responsibility for their own health as "successful citizens" (Ravenscroft, 1993). This included participation in physical activities (Ravenscroft, 1993). This shift in responsibility from the state to the citizen is reflected in the Horse Strategy in calling for all "responsible equestrians" to ensure the Strategy's success:

> "There is not a rider or driver or worker in equestrianism who is absolved from all responsibility. If you do your bit the Horse Strategy will be a success. If you prefer to leave it all to someone else you lose your right to complain when nothing happens"
>
> (BHIC, 2005: 8)

The shift to personal responsibility for participation in sport focused attention on factors constraining participation. Ravenscroft (2004: 124) described three levels of constraint as barriers to sports participation (personal, interpersonal, and societal/structural). These examined; i) individual psychological factors (do you want to participate?); ii) group-oriented activities requiring a partner(s), e.g. tennis or netball; and iii) social or structural factors such as family priorities or financial limitations reduced the likelihood of participation. The argument was that creating access to sporting facilities and addressing the three levels of constraint through dedicated sports development departments, created a "dual agenda" for encouraging sports participation at local-level (Ravenscroft, 2004: 124). This dual agenda led to a trend of "spinning out" leisure provision from local authorities to leisure management companies transferring the responsibility for subsidising sports facilities and addressing constraints (Ravenscroft, 2004: 127). One result was that disadvantaged members of society were excluded from access as management companies catered to individuals who could pay for participation, although, this gap was intended to be filled by the creation of school partnerships with the local community creating sports "hubs" (Ravenscroft, 2004: 128).

2.3.3 The countryside

A third factor with relevance for sports participation relates to wider environmental issues, in particular the role of the countryside. As Elson (2004: 11) argued with "25 percent of all [sporting] activity… taking place in the countryside" it was important to understand constraints relating to "land-use", "planning" and "residents objections" to the demand for sporting activities in their area. He stressed that several access constraints could be addressed and

managed through expanding existing sustainable routes (for example, National Parks networks and designated footpath schemes created by Sport England, the Countryside and the Environment Agency) to accommodate growing demand (Elson, 2004: 111-12). He also argued for the promotion of rural-based activities, "demonstration schemes for sports such as… horse riding… in designated areas" to raise awareness through "publicising the results of successful schemes so that their principles may be emulated elsewhere" (Elson, 2004: 118). And, recommended that rural-urban interdependencies should be promoted through "County Sports Partnerships" involving local authorities developing partnerships with the Countryside and Environment Agencies to provide transportation between rural and urban areas to increase access and participation in a range of activities (Elson, 2004: 117-8).

The findings of these studies (Elson, 2004 , Kay, 2004 , Ravenscroft, 2004 , Rowe *et al.*, 2004) were problematic for Sport England. Historically, Sport England funded schemes centred on the provision of sporting facilities, yet this was found to be ineffective in increasing mass sports participation (Office for National Statistics., 2003). With a range of studies identifying determinant factors influencing sports participation (see Table 2.1 below), all called for a clearer understanding of why people choose to participate in sport.

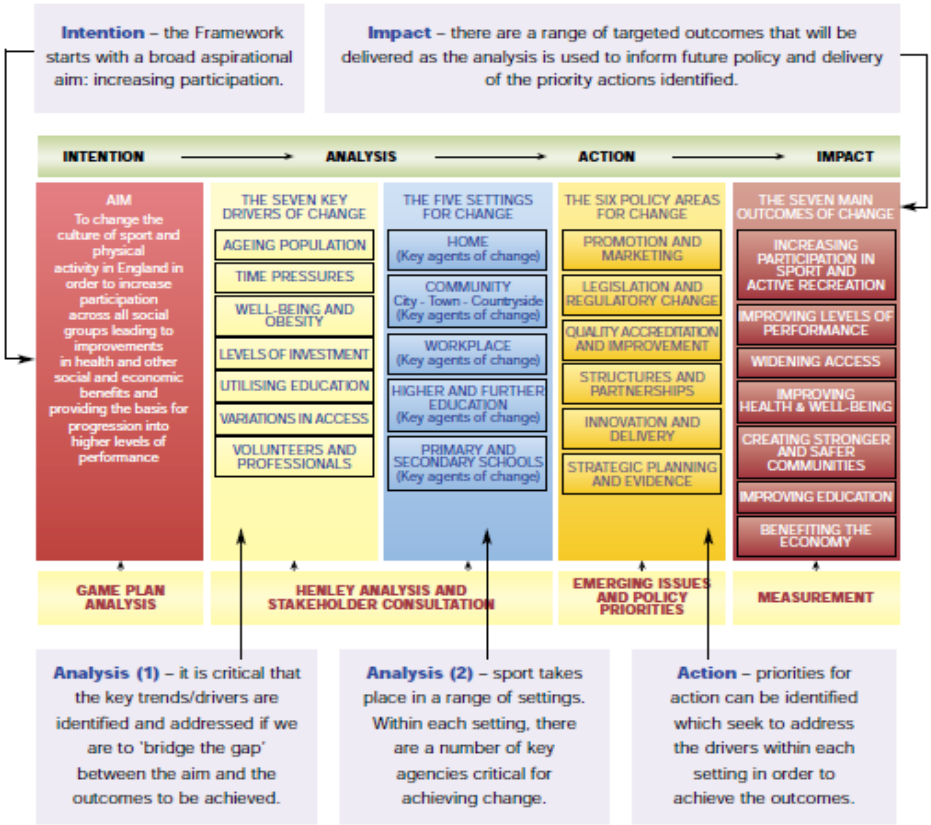
Table 2.1: Summary evidence on the determinants of sport participation

Rowe *et al.*, (2004)	**Kay (2004)**	**Ravenscroft (2004)**	**Elson (2004)**
Age	**Family**	**Access to sports facilities/constraints**	**Environmental constraints**
Gender	Household (1 or 2 parents)	Management to facilitate sport to disadvantaged groups through partnerships at the local-level	Land use
Ethnicity	Family work status (number of earners)	Constraints: Personal – motivation to participate	Planning
Geographical location	Social class (parental occupation or educational level)	Interpersonal – preferring joint activities, lack of partner to participate	Residential objections to sporting activities
Income		Societal (or structural) – priorities within the family or financial (income) pressures	Sustainable routes
Social class			Demonstrations of sports to encourage participation Marketing – lack of awareness of participation opportunities Rural-urban interdependencies to increase participation

2.3.4 The Framework for Sport (Sport England, 2004)

Building on the recommendations from the four studies, Sport England created the "Framework for Sport" to make "England an active and successful sporting nation by 2020" (based on a 1% increase in participation, per annum) (Sport England., 2004b). The document offers a "robust conceptual framework" to act as a mechanism for systematically testing Sport England's rationale and approach to increasing sports participation (see Fig 2.2 below). Action is directed towards emergent "policy priorities" and to affect change in the levels of sports participation (Sport England, 2004b: 10). Sport England (2004b: 10) recognised that changing a nation's activity levels is subject to demographic factors underpinned by an individual choice to participate linked to the concepts of drivers and settings (constraints) forming part of the Framework for Sport.

Figure 2.2: The Framework for Sport in England (Sport England., 2004b: 10)



In 2005, The British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group (BHF Group, Oxford University) was commissioned to investigate childrens' and adults' reasons for participation and non-participation in sport (Sport England., 2005). The key objective was to develop a "more sophisticated understanding of the motivations and barriers to sport and suggest "likely interventions" that would affect "behaviour change" towards sports participation (Sport England., 2005: 2). What was found was a clear lack of understanding the determinants influencing the start, cessation or maintenance of sports participation throughout an individual's lifespan (Sport England., 2005: 2). And, importantly, participation determinants fluctuated dependending on what the authors termed cultural, social and identity "life-stage" shifts (Sport England., 2005: 5). For example, leaving school, having children or bereavement, which changed individuals social networks and identities (Sport England., 2005: 5). Simply put,

life-stage shifts influenced individual participation and could provide the impetus to "drop out" of physical activities altogether (Sport England., 2005: 5). Several key determinants emerged from the study: age, social interaction, health benefits (delaying the ageing process and managing body weight) and access to affordable local facilities and activities influencing children and adult decisions to participate in sport (Sport England., 2005: 4-5).

The BHF Group findings of life-stage shifts demonstrated support for Ravenscroft's (2004) three levels of constraint (personal, interpersonal and societal) and found similar factors likely to impact upon participation rates. In addition, the BHF Group considered the success of previous sports participation policies. Respondents reported that official policy statements promoting the benefits of regular exercise and participation served to deter rather than encourage participation (Sport England., 2005: 5-6). Therefore, the authors recommended further research into individual psychological variables linked to the concept of life-stage shifts to understand and address the central barriers to increasing sports participation (Sport England., 2005: 7).

These studies also raised a number of issues for increasing participation in equestrianism. First, they showed that despite official efforts to encourage participation, the decision to participate is a highly complex and individualised process. Second, several determinants of participation have emerged involving cultural, social and identity factors which affects individual choice to participate. Third, access constraints (many equestrian activities take place in rural, rather than urban areas) also influence the choice to participate in equestrianism. So how far do the determinants of sports participation, correlate with equestrian participation?

2.3.5 Determinants of sports participation

Several studies have investigated what factors influence participation in sport including personal, interpersonal and social/structural constraints of sport commitment (Scanlan *et al.*, 1993), others examine the motivation to engage in sport and exercise between genders (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2005), the reasons for participation and non-participation in children and adults (Allender *et al.*, 2006), as well as the socio-demographic and economic determinants underlying sports participation and expenditure (Lera-Lopez and Rapun-Garate, 2007). While these studies found that determinants such as "income", "educational level" and "household"[6] influenced sports participation, they called for more longitudinal data to fully analyse the effects of each factor over time.

Research moved on to analyse longitudinal data sets (Farrell and Shields, 2002), to develop an understanding of why people participate in sport (Downward, 2004 , Downward, 2007 , Fox and Richards, 2004). A further aim was to address the perceived "gap" in understanding participation and to test theoretical models of sports participation against empirical interrogation of large longitudinal datasets (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 519).

Downward (2004) adopted a broader economic perspective, a combination of psychology, sociology and post-Keynesian economic theory, to investigate the determinants of sports participation. This enabled him to move beyond the neo-classical economic predictive method based on an "income-leisure trade off model of labour supply" to gaining a full understanding of what influences individual choice (Downward, 2004: 372). In other words, previous economic studies of sport determinants focused on indirect analysis and modelling of decision-making processes relative to available leisure time (outside of labour or occupation) and income constraints (Downward, 2004). Post-Keynesian analysis aligned with sociological insights in relation to concepts of leisure (Veblen, 2007)

[6] Household is understood by Downward as referring to 'household tastes' – time and social constraints rather than correlating to individual participation choice and fluctuations in income.

and cited the importance of social values, tastes and interaction relative to individual choice including sports participation (Bourdieu, 1978 , Bourdieu, 1979 [2006]). This led Downward (2004) to create and test an explanatory and predictive model of sports participation (using the heterodox economic/social science approach, see Table 2.2 below).

Table 2.2: Summary of theories of participation (Downward, 2007: 637)

Theory	Factors affecting engagement	Methodological Emphasis	Predictions
Neoclassical economic			
Income-leisure	Maximise utility	Prediction	Engagement demand varies directly with income, inversely with work hours
New Household	Maximise utility	Prediction	As above, but domestic activity will reduce engagement demand
Heterodox economic/ social science			
Psychological	Hierarchical choice influenced by experience, discrete frames of commitment	Explanation/ prediction	Engagement varies with income, previous engagement
Post-Keynesian	As above and social relations	Explanation/ prediction	Engagement also varies with socio- economic status and that of identified groupings
Sociological	Choice influenced by dialectic of identity formation	Explanation/ prediction	Engagement varies with gender, previous engagement, engagement of identified groupings

Downward (2004) started testing the neo-classical claim that income and work variables determined sports participation across twelve sporting activities selected from the UK's General Household Survey dataset (GHS, 1996). He realised sports participation preferences had previously been viewed in isolation. His approach included taking into account the concept of "household tastes" with reference to time and social constraints rather than correlating individual participation choice to fluctuations in income (Downward, 2004: 374). Even so, income was found to raise the likelihood of participation, but the size

effects were small and reflected male-oriented sports activities. This led Downward (2004: 390-91) to conclude that key participation determinants centred on a combination of factors - "age, gender, household (tastes) and income" effects.

In a second study, Downward and Riordan (2007) took the previously identified determinants of age, gender, household (tastes) and income with data selected from the GHS (2002) and used sociological insight to analyse the conceptual "drivers" and "settings" for change within the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) (see Figure 2.2 above). They found some evidence to support the model and discussed other determinant factors, as follows:

In relation to the "drivers for change" (Sport England., 2004b), "ageing" and "time" emerged as significant for the participation decision-making process. This was consistent with the findings from the first study (Downward, 2004). However, the authors claimed that the effect on participation of the remaining "drivers" - well-being, investment, education, and access were "subsumed within personal consumption and social interaction effects" (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535). In other words, while age and time were influential, the remaining drivers only partially explained why people chose to participate in sport. Nonetheless, exceptions emerged when regional variations in investment in sport funding allocation were taken into account (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535). If increased funding facilitated access to sports facilities, then the level of constraint for sports participation decisions was reduced (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535).

A significant link was found between an individual's previous experience of an activity, termed "personal consumption capital" and the increased probability of commitment to participation (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535). Likewise, membership of a sports club also encouraged participation in activities

(Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535) and created an identity shift in individuals by becoming a "member", which reinforced participation commitment (Gruneau, 1999 , Woods, 2007: 37-43). Yet, if sports participation became synonymous with "work" such as instructing or coaching a local team, this introduced an income-time constraint that reduced the ability to participate in the activity itself (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535).

Frequency of participation in one sport can also be conditional upon the commitment to participation across a range of sports. This suggests a ranking in individuals' decision-making processes, whereby the highest degree of commitment correlated with the highest ranked activity (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535). For example, in equestrianism a range of activities exist; dressage, polo, show jumping, endurance and so forth. However, weekly participation ratios favouring dressage over show jumping 4:1, underwritten by a conditional "prior allocation of resources to sports activities in general" (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535). Essentially, which activity or sport the individual values the most, influences the frequency of participation. Downward and Riordan, (2007: 535) argued it is "only once these constraints are set, that work-time and other constraints influence the allocation of time to activities". Despite these developments in understanding sports participation, the question of how formal policy could influence individual behaviour and decisions remained a challenge for policy makers (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 535).

So what does this imply for the Horse Strategy's challenge of increasing participation in equestrianism? Drawing on these findings, policy to increase mass participation was thought more likely to be effective if targeted in terms of "age", "gender" and broader "lifestyle" factors.

Returning to the second study (Downward and Riordan, 2007: 536) which argued that if sports facilities are increased with the intention of benefitting

participants, increased access would not necessarily create increased participation, this decision is still contingent upon agents choice. Drawing on insights from sociological theory Downward and Riordan (2007: 536) proposed "policy activism" to increase participation by focusing on broad sets of physical activities and removing a range of constraints; economic, access, cultural and educational to facilitate greater participation (Downward, 2007 , Downward and Riordan, 2007: 536). For example, they supported the provision of 'taster' sessions at local sports facilities to address the issue of overcoming individuals' lack of confidence to participate, echoing Ravenscroft's (2004) concept of "personal" constraint and Elson's (2004) suggestions to widen sports "awareness" and "access". However, the question of funding to adopt this approach raises the previously discussed tension between initiatives directed towards increasing mass participation and recent austerity measures add an additional layer of complex financial constraints to increase participation (HMTreasury, 2010).

The final study in the series (Downward, 2007) used the GHS (2002) dataset to test the findings of Downward and Riordan's study (2007). However, Downward (2007: 638) changed his definition of sports participation from "leisure to competitive team sport" to taking part in "any sports" activity. He selected the top ranked activities – walking, swimming, keep fit, cycling, weight training, running, football, golf, rugby and netball (Downward, 2007: 643) and sought a more sophisticated understanding of the interdependent factors influencing and predicting sports participation decisions.

Consistent with earlier studies, "income" and "hours worked" (during the working week) influenced participation, "higher income promotes participation, increased paid and unpaid work hours reduce it" (Downward, 2007: 643). However, the size effects of these factors were again "small" (Downward, 2007: 644). More importantly, the likelihood of participation was strongly correlated

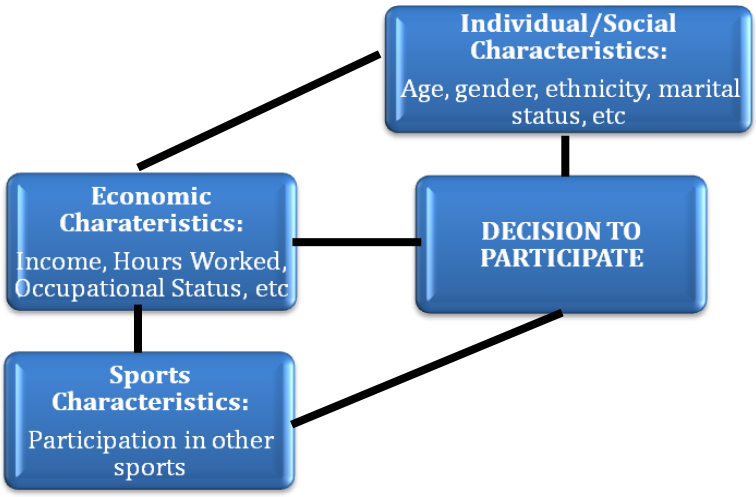
with "higher educational levels", "working status" and "gender" (Downward, 2007: 644). The presence of children in a household was found to reduce participation in individual sports, while increasing participation in family-oriented activities such as, swimming and indoor football. Gender remained a significant factor in the choice to participate with males more likely to take part in team sports (Downward, 2007: 647). While females migrated towards keep fit activities associated with feminine concerns regarding body image (Downward, 2007: 647). By far the strongest factor influencing participation was "participation in other activities" that Downward (2007: 650) referred to as "spill-over" effects. The implications for equestrianism is that, if an equestrian participates in for example, dressage they might be expected to explore other participation opportunities. In the wider context, the classic example of spill-over effects would be the individual sports "all-rounder" who regularly takes part in a variety of sports and activities.

Finally, Downward (2007: 650) discussed the implications of his research in terms of developing an effective sports policy to increase mass sports participation. The "drivers for change" determinants within the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) model gained external empirical and theoretical support from this series of exploratory studies. But, Downward (2007: 651) suggested that raising general levels of participation in particular activities can have positive "spill-over" effects for other activities because of the interdependent nature of demands found during the research. While supportive of the Framework for Sport, he noted some caveats. First, the studies did not adequately address "supply-side" features of sport provision: would greater access to sport necessarily increase the likelihood of spill-over between sports? This led Downward (2007: 651) to call for further investigation into the extent of the spill-over effects in sports participation to inform policy designed to increase participation. And, recognising that individual decision-making processes are subject to various social constraints and influences dependent on life-stage shifts

in culture, identity and social networks (Ravenscroft, 2004 , Sport England., 2005). Downward (2007: 636) argued that psychological considerations were central in participation decisions (see Figure 2.3 below, Coakley and White, 1999 , Downward and Riordan, 2007 , Gruneau, 1999). Downward (2007: 633) calls the psychological aspect of participation the "hierarchical deliberation" or satiation of particular individual wants and needs linked to the choice to participate. Deliberation allows an individual to choose whether or not to participate in a sport or a variety of sports (Downward, 2007: 650-51). What emerged from the previous sports participation determinant literature (Allender *et al.*, 2006 , Farrell and Shields, 2002 , Fox and Richards, 2004 , Scanlan *et al.*, 1993) and this series of studies (Downward, 2004 , Downward, 2007 , Downward and Riordan, 2007), is a complex set of interdependent factors underpinned by individual psychological deliberation that collectively form the decision-making processes that lead to sports participation.

At this point, is it worth considering the relevance of these findings in the context of the Horse Strategy's challenge to increase participation in equestrianism. The Horse Strategy links to Sport England's Framework for Sport (2004) as a featured activity within the wider remit of increasing mass sports participation. Is the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) a relevant model for explaining choices to participate in equestrianism? Or, is there a different set of factors and constraints that can explain participation in grassroots equestrianism.

Figure 2.3 : Sports participation decisions (Downward, 2007: 641)



2.4 Why do people participate in equestrianism?

In this section, I review the equestrian literature to provide insights into i) what influences participation and ii) whether these determinants reflect or vary from those identified in the Framework for Sport and sports participation literature (Sport England., 2004b).

2.4.1 What is the attraction to horses?

The concept of a unique bond or human-horse partnership has been cited since ancient texts such as "Xenophon's The Art of Horsemanship" circa 400B.C. (Morgan, 2007). For most grassroots equestrians, the level of physicality involved in the human-horse partnership through horse-riding activities and non-verbal signals differentiates equestrianism from other human-animal "partnerships" (Clutton-Brock, 1992: 12-15, Robinson, 1999: 42). The interest humans demonstrate in horses continues within contemporary literature that demonstrates how the human-horse partnership has shaped sport and civilisations throughout history (Barnes, 2008 , Chamberlin, 2006 , Sassoon, 1999 , Smiley, 2000). While much of this literature has a fictitious base, it raises

the need to explore the question why do humans chose to engage with horses? Equestrianism poses risks of injury or even death (Silver, 2002), it is argued to be expensive, elitist (Dashper, 2011 , Robinson, 1999) and possibly addictive (Nutt, 2009). Yet, millions of equestrians (grassroots and professional) continue to enjoy this unique human-horse relationship.

In the academic literature, there is a clear deficiency with regard to exploring human interest in horses and participation. Wipper (2000:50) has argued that a central barrier to understanding human-horse partnerships is linked to the "anthropomorphism" debate in which grassroots equestrians are dismissed as eccentric animal owners projecting questionable human qualities (personality traits and characteristics) onto their horses. Instead, Wipper (2000) pays particular attention to describing how the human-horse bond is founded upon mutual "respect, trust, patience, kindness, [and] feel sensitivity," where the subsequent "performance" is a result of the combined partnership (Wipper, 2000: 48). In order to refute claims of anthropomorphism for human interest and participation with horses, Wipper refers to professional equestrian experiences. William Fox-Pitt (Olympic rider) supported Wipper's argument in describing his winning horse Tamarillo: "we have a partnership rather than a relationship: I'm very fond of him and we have a mutual respect" (Fox-Pitt, 2009:123). Wipper (2000: 51) continued that it is "partnership", which results in performance, irrespective of other variables such as the most "suitable" breed for a certain activity. Other studies (Brandt, 2004 , Game, 2001 , Rowan, 2008) support Wipper's position and identify several factors that influence the decision to participate, such as "sensations"; "arousal and anxiety associated with horse riding" - experienced through "the risk of falling", "interaction with an animal", and/or "synergy with a horse". These determinants are largely psychological in nature, consistent with the "wants" and "needs" of participants that influence participation decisions (Downward, 2007: 636). This combination of the human-horse partnership and psychological deliberation identified several determinant

factors to consider and explore in this study when considering why people choose to participate in equestrianism.

2.4.2 Who participates in equestrianism?

Recent research has focused on horse-world culture and participation trends (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 5). They argued that traditionally, the horse assisted in maintaining the position of "elites and traditional rural communities" in the UK. Their study examined how "the meanings invested in horses and their use are diverse, multiple and contestable" relative to the complexity of what they called "contemporary Euro-American cultural life" (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 2), i.e. the reported resurgence of interest in horses across Europe and American and how this links to "the multiplicity of iconography around them [horses]" (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 2-3). In short, horses create multiple networks, which people can interact with, and access. These networks are diverse, generating many competing lifestyles and meanings associated with horses and equestrianism. From this perspective, Latimer and Birke (2009: 2) distinguish different types of participant within what they called the "Anglo-Irish (A-I) horse world" (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 2). First, are participants for whom "working, playing and being with horses can itself be performed as a way of life" forming their central reason to participate (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 2). Other participants include those who view the horse and equestrianism as "accessories" to a perceived "lifestyle" in which horses are displayed as "conspicuous" status symbols (Veblen, 2005), implying entirely different reasons for participation (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 2).

Birke differentiated between A-I grassroots equestrians and the lifestyle participant groups, characterising the former as "horsey"; "generous and helpful, physically and emotionally tough and brave," and although "deeply conservative … will always be ready to help you out" (Birke, 2008: 5). Latimer argued that being horsey created order within the A-I horse-world, where social relations

with horses developed an environment in which "animals, practices and people can be placed and have place" (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 6). For instance, participation in dressage, eventing, leisure-riding and natural horsemanship draw upon different skills sets and interests in different forms of riding, yet provide place and order within the A-I hierarchy (Latimer and Birke, 2009: 6). Even so, the iconic status of the horse remained the common denominator for all groups of participants.

Latimer and Birke (2009) like Robinson (1999) argued that societal shifts were occurring which threatened the A-I horse-world, particularly the introduction of the hunting ban in 2005 (Austen, 2010 , Ward, 1999). They argued that the effect of the ban impacted on rural areas and the A-I horse-world by way of "the emergence of the "New Countryside" as a democratised site of quality lifestyle, entertainment, and leisure" (see also Cloke and Little, 1997 , Latimer and Birke, 2009: 6, Murdoch *et al.*, 2003). And, it is within this new leisure-oriented countryside for lifestyle participants, that the BHIC and Defra identified an opportunity to increase participation (BHIC, 2005: 32-34).

Latimer and Birke's (2009) study involved dividing the horse-world into two groups of equestrian participants (horsey and lifestyle), but they did not take into account the range of participants on a continuum between these two extremes and focused on two points on the spectrum of engagement (HCR, 2004: 10). Gaps still remain in developing a more sophisticated understanding of the range of determinants that underpin participation in all types of equestrian participant.

2.4.3 Health benefits of equestrian participation

Horse riding has long been associated with therapeutic benefits dating back to Hippocrates who identified "horse riding's healing rhythm" (Bliss, 1997). Developments in hippotherapy (Benda *et al.*, 2000) have seen growing

recognition of this field of study and treatment, used for a range of medical conditions including muscular-skeletal and psychological disorders. Pauw (2000: 523), studying the effectiveness of hippotherapy through the analysis of testimonies of parents, therapists, and patients, found support for positive psychological benefits derived from horse riding: increased motivation, higher self-esteem, better concentration and academic performance (Pauw, 2000: 523). Lessick *et al.,* (2004: 51) explored the effects of horse riding on a single individual suffering from "Brown-Sequard syndrome", a debilitating physical condition following severe spinal-cord trauma. After a three-month period, both quantitative and qualitative benefits were reported: dramatic increases in "muscle strength" and "range of motion in the shoulders" accompanied by a "sense of independence" and improved "self-esteem" (Lessick *et al.*, 2004: 51). The authors concluded: "[h]orses are inspirational creatures...They allow us to mould them to our needs but yet are governed by innate flight patterns that teach us to communicate non-verbally" (Lessick *et al.*, 2004: 48).

The benefits of hippotherapy, however, continue to be contested (Friedmann, 1990). While personal testimony from parents, riders and health professionals have endorsed self perceived benefits of riding, measurable health benefits, such as changes in heart rate, have so far been elusive (MacKinnon *et al.*, 1995) leaving a weak evidence base for the health benefits of riding. And, if there is little evidence of the health benefits of riding, there is even less evidence of health benefits of other forms of equestrianism such as volunteering in activities involving horses, owning and/or breeding horses. And as Richards (2006: 19) reminds us: horse owners do not necessarily ride or care for their horses. What we are prompted to ask here is: what does influence riders and non-riders to participate in equestrianism?

2.4.4 Income and cost

The need to study determinants of equestrian participation was raised in 1999. Robinson (1999: 42) observed that changing socio-demographics and increased leisure time opened up access to riding centres, and the traditional perceptions of the horse with "power…[and being] reserved for the ruling elite in many areas" were beginning to change. Despite restricted access to grazing land combined with the "relatively high cost of horse care", horse ownership continued to rise, therefore an investigation of 'why' people participated in equestrianism remained to be answered (Robinson, 1999: 42). This included exploring "why some owners... devote most of their disposable income to horse-care to the exclusion of holidays, new cars and clothes" (Robinson, 1999: 42). This latter phenomenon called into question the neo-classical trade-off concept that income dictates participation (Downward, 2004: 372), suggesting that other factors influence participation decision-making processes for equestrianism. The effects of income and demand were found to be "small" and form part of a range of interdependent factors influencing the decision to participate (Downward and Riordan, 2007). Even so, the choice of owning a horse or participating in weekly riding lessons is relative to income and cost factors that cannot be entirely ignored for equestrianism.

The costs involved in horse ownership and equestrian participation (at grassroots or professional level) varies immensely. In 2010, regular horse-care ranged between £70 (grazing only) to £800 per month for full-livery – where horse care duties are performed by staff (BHS, 2010). This figure does not include other regular costs such as shoeing, bedding or occasional costs for equipment, transportation, and lessons (see Appendix I). On average based on BHS (2010) figures, horse ownership can cost in the region of £3-4,000 per horse, per annum. And, simply starting to ride incurs basic costs for equipment (hat, jodhpurs, body-protector and boots) of approximately £200-500 per rider. Excluding tuitions costs, initial participation in equestrianism demands a

significantly higher investment in standard equipment, in comparison to other sports. For example, to participate in running activities, initial costs involve a pair of trainers (£20-50) and suitable clothing (£10-30).

Equestrianism also involves further costs, for example, joining a representative body, annual BHS Gold membership (including personal insurance, for 2010) is £62.00. Added to this figure are various potential affiliated memberships to the equestrian discipline bodies. British Dressage membership ranges from £22 for Pony Club level to £76 for adult membership excluding horse registration and competition entry fees.[7] This brief example provides a clear indication of why equestrianism is regarded as an expensive activity (Dashper, 2011: 2) and highlights a potential societal or structural constraint to participation (Ravenscroft, 2004).

However, does income become a barrier to different aspects of equestrianism? For example, what is stopping all equestrians from becoming horse owners? Does income relative to different "life-stage" shifts influence participation (Sport England., 2005)? Or are other influences besides developing a partnership with a horse, riding it and cost implication influencing the decision to participate in equestrianism?

2.4.5 Other influences on the decision to participate in equestrianism

Equestrianism has historically enjoyed associations with royalty, aristocracy and military contexts together with links to wealth, rurality, and elitism (Braddick, 2010 , Dashper, 2011 , Williams, 2011). The current royal family is a prime example (Williams, 2011: 28). The Queen is an acknowledged "horsewoman, race-patron and judge of breeding" and this enthusiasm has been passed to her daughter, the Princess Royal and granddaughter Zara Phillips, who have both competed in the Olympic games as equestrians (Williams, 2011: 28). Returning to William Fox-Pitt, he attended Eton Public School, followed his mother into the

[7] See http://www.britishdressage.co.uk/membership

discipline of eventing and regularly forms part of the Team GBR (Fox-Pitt, 2009). Therefore, this can lend support to Latimer and Birke's (2009) argument for the participants in the new countryside, the horse is an accessory, a method of "conspicuous consumption" – as a symbol of wealth and association with upper-class society (Veblen, 2005).

Williams (2011: 29), cautions against a "homogenous middle or upper-class reading" of equestrianism, she viewed equestrianism as playing host to a "combination of high and low culture" based on the example of Pat Smythe, a prominent female equestrian (Williams, 2011: 29). Smythe, following her Olympic début in Stockholm, 1956 produced the stereotypical "pony-mad British teenager" image which created an "immediate legacy" for female grassroots equestrians (Williams, 2011: 19). Although originally from the middle to upper classes, the premature death of Smythe's father changed the family's financial situation and produced the "ethic of hard-graft in the face of adversity … [the Smythe] trademark" (Williams, 2011: 21). This led Smythe to fund her participation through a range of entrepreneurial ventures, including authoring a series of pony adventures to appeal across class boundaries (Williams, 2011: 28).

It is clear that equestrian participation is linked to several interdependent factors that influence an individual's decision-making process. For example, while social class, household and income can be influential in facilitating participation, what about the low-culture or grassroots participants to which Williams (2011: 29) referred? Are different factors applicable? Mary King an Olympic team mate of William Fox-Pitt has a very different background. She describes her own route into equestrianism as follows:

> "No one in our family rode…My mother, who was frightened of horses, had given up after three lessons...I longed for a pony of my own, but there was no hope, as

> we had neither land nor money. My mother says if she hadn't had me at home in bed, she would have thought the hospital had given her the wrong baby."
>
> (King, 2009: 5)

Despite King's intrinsic or personal determinant(s) that influenced her participation, she achieved entry into the world of professional equestrianism.

The literature on sports participation places an emphasis on gender as a factor and that men are more likely to participate in sport per se than women (Downward, 2007). From the examples above both men and women take part in equestrianism, but at the beginning of the twentieth century equestrian participation was male dominated (DiMarco, 2008 , Wipper, 2000). And, continues to dominate perceived "masculine" equestrian activities; racing (Cassidy, 2002, 2007), elite-level eventing, show jumping (King, 2009: 5) and hunting suggested as symbolising "masculinity" and "manhood" (Weil, 2006: 1). In contrast to these equestrian activity, female participation now super cedes male participation within grassroots equestrianism (Dashper, 2012 , Reidi, 2006) and the latest National Equestrian Survey (BETA, 2011) reported over 90 percent of female participation takes places within riding centres and leisure-oriented activities (BETA, 2011). Dashper (2012: 10) argues that equestrianism is constructed as a "predominantly female activity within the UK". Yet the equestrian discourse remains linked to masculine knowledge and subsequent meaning reflecting male dominance at the professional level of competition and is argued as perpetuating the perception of equestrianism as elitist and exclusive (Birke and Brandt, 2009 , Dashper, 2012).

2.5 Increasing participation in equestrianism

A central tenet of the Horse Strategy is unification within the horse-world in order to maintain and attract equestrians. There are contrasting views about the state of progress in reorganising the horse-world. One argument is that

amalgamating smaller representative bodies such as the ABRS and the BHS that serve and support both grassroots equestrians and businesses, would avoid unnecessary duplication, reduce costs and create a united "political voice" and public image (BHIC, 2005: 32-34). This development of a "horse-industry" would, in turn, help to retain existing, and attract new participants into equestrianism (Richards, 2006: 20-21). By contrast, Bacon (2009) has argued that the term horse industry has been widely recognized for a decade or more reflecting the economic significance of the horse-world. But both the Henley Centre Report (2004) and Richards (2006) present evidence suggesting that many grassroots equestrians have "neither the expertise, nor the time, nor the inclination to be active participants" in the process of creating an industry (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993: 223).

As part of implementing the Horse Strategy, in 2007 the BHIC published on their website an Action Plan (see Appendix II) including progress made against the Strategy's aims. The 2007 plan reported that initial meetings were underway to bringing the Horse Industry together, to increase participation and boost economic performance. But although the Plan was conceived as an annual planning tool, no further plans have been published. Despite the lack of official updates, research (National Equestrian Surveys, BETA, 2006, 2011 , BHS., 2010 , Sport England., 2010) has continued to establish rates of equestrian participation within the UK. The combined data (see Appendix III) reflect earlier findings (BETA, 1995, 1999) that females constitute over 90 percent of those involved in equestrian activities especially those aged under 18 and over 45 years, over 98 percent are white and almost half are high income households. Geographically, participation is concentrated in the South reflecting higher income levels, the exception being London where there are severe spatial constraints.

Overall levels of participation in equestrian activities (riding, owning, spectating) have fallen from 11 million in 2004 (see Appendix III, BETA, 1999 , HCR, 2004).

And, the National Equestrian Surveys shows a drop from 4.3 million in 2006 to 3.5 million people in 2011 who had ridden in the last twelve months, while those who had ridden in the last month fell from 2.1 million in 2006 to 1.6 million in 2011. The reductions in 2006 were explained in terms of "lack of interest" while in 2011 economic constraints linked to the financial crisis were cited (BETA, 2011).

In the context of these overall reductions in participation, what are the opportunities for increasing participation? There is evidence of desire, if not necessarily demand, for horse riding by those who do not participate, particularly among women (Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation., 2011). There may be potential to attempt to engage with those who declared "no interest" in the BETA surveys in 2006 and 2011, and to re-engage with 1.3 million former riders who expressed a wish to re-engage identified in the 2011 survey.

Exploring the physical and psychological benefits of horse riding, the BHS study (2010) combined physiological testing with questionnaires to measure physical and psychological effects. Findings supported earlier claims (Sport England., 2004a) that horse riding is a moderate intensity activity. While this is consistent with Sport England's recommendation to engage in activity that elevates the heart rate (BHS., 2010: 5, Jorgenson, 1997) it does not necessarily equate to the "three times a week" that is also recommended. 80 percent of respondents reported that equestrianism facilitated "contact with nature," "scenery and views" and generated a sense of "well-being," while enhancing "personal development incentives" such as the sensations to "escape", "develop skills", "challenge myself", or "experience excitement" (BHS., 2010: 6). These particular findings relate to the sphere of "hierarchical deliberation" which influences decisions to participate (Downward, 2007). While the BHS study findings support claims of therapeutic benefits derived from participation with horses

(Bliss, 1997 , Lessick *et al.*, 2004), the sample of 1248 respondents equates to less than 0.04 percent of the estimated 3.5m riders within the 2011 NES. Larger sample populations for testing may be required in order to increase confidence in the findings (BETA, 2011).[8]

The BHS 2010 study revealed evidence of spill-over effects (Downward, 2007) with 61 percent of grassroots equestrians participating in other sporting activities with walking proving most popular (BHS., 2010: 35). The BHS study did not, however, explore spill-over effects within equestrianism where an equestrian may engage in several different activities or disciplines, for example; dressage, eventing, show jumping, reining, polo, polocrosse, showing and hunting. Each activity embodies an element of specificity or a "social world" governed by a distinct etiquette (Latimer and Birke, 2009) while moving between these activities involves the acquisition of new skills and rules.

Combined data from the NES (2011), BHS (2010) and Sport England (2011) commissioned studies (see Appendix III) reveal further threats to increasing participation, a central aim of the Horse Strategy. Regular participation had fallen significantly by 19 percent between 2010 and 2011. The extent of the impact of the economic crisis is apparent as respondents indicated a distinct change in their main constraint on participation from the previously reported "no interest" (30%) in equestrianism to "expense" (40%). And the continued influence of economic factors saw a reduction in the number of horses owned and ownership falling to 988,000[9] and 451,000 respectively.

What implications do these studies have for the successful implementation of the Strategy? Evidence of factors that influence interest and demand to participate in equestrianism suggest that in the current economic climate there has been

[8] Based on NES 2011 participation levels 3.5m (over 12 months) and 1.6m (monthly) respectively: NES *n*=6000/<0.2percent and 0.4percent; BHS *n*=1248/<0.04percent and 0.1percent; SE *n*=113,055/3percent and 7percent
[9] Including 88,000 from the professional sector

little progress in implementing the Horse Strategy. However, it is also important to consider the supply-side. One of the central aims of the Strategy is to create a national network of licensed riding centres to facilitate more access to horses (BEF, 2005, 2009 , BHIC, 2005: 43-44). Although overhead liabilities and declining numbers of riding centres have been cited as major barriers to developing such a network (see Box 2.1 below), as Bacon (2002b, 2005) has argued that the key factor inhibiting growth is the lack of appropriate business skills among proprietors.

Box 2.1 shows the barriers to business growth for riding centres and highlights some of the factors raised by a range of equestrian stakeholders as part of a consultation process informing the aims of the Horse Strategy.

Box 2.1 Barriers to business growth for riding centres

As part of the Horse Strategy's stakeholder consultation process to create a sustainable horse industry, equestrian establishments offered the following perceived barriers to business growth (BHIC, 2005: 42-3):

Employment and environmental factors

- Recruitment and retention of skilled staff;
- Regulations – fiscal and legislative;
- Lack of equine tourism development.

Business Resources

- Business skills – gaining access to business support and improving skills;
- Lack of local networks with local government to enhance the value of equestrian products and services and ensure the inclusion of the industry in rural and land use policies, for example the impact of farm diversification;
- Lack of new markets, not only export but also domestic – promoting British equestrian products.

2.5.1 Supply-side of participation – barriers

Between 1985-92 Warwick College conducted a series of longitudinal surveys aimed at monitoring the performance of local riding centres entitled "The Horse Business Management Reference Handbook" (Bacon, 2005: 1), and later as the "Equine Business Guide" (Bacon, 2002a , Bacon and O'Regan, 1995, 1996, 1999 , Bacon and Wilkinson, 2006). Bacon (2002b: 5-6, 27) accepts that there has been a 20 percent decline in the number of riding centres between 1996 and 2002 with "26% of businesses" remaining "in a break-even or loss making position" (Bacon, 2002b: 5-6, 27). Although, contrary to horse-world proprietors' claims of unfair "business rates and minimum wage" levels to explain performance levels, Bacon (2002b: 1) dismissed these factors as insufficient causes of "business failure". He argued that "65% of proprietors reported higher profits", a "95% increased demand" for riding and "75 percent" of respondents were "more confident about the future" of their business than "five years ago" - yet riding centres remained in decline (Bacon, 2002b: 1). He also suggested that the above figures represented the stronger businesses which have survived and adapted to changing market demands. The primary reason for their survival was attributed to management skills around human resources, marketing and financial control. These businesses capitalised on their rural/urban locale and had the capacity to compete in the "increasingly sophisticated leisure market". This is reflected in the promotion of urban riding centres and encouraging participation in equestrianism through such campaigns as "Hoof it" (see Hoof it., 2010).

There are additional factors, prior to the implementation of the Horse Strategy, that have hindered grassroots riding centre growth; i) the impact of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in 2001 in rural areas (Crossman and Walsh, 2008), ii) the "Farm Diversification" scheme that provided financial incentives for farmers to enter the horse-world following FMD (Crossman and Walsh, 2008 , Hillyard, 2006 , Nerlich *et al.*, 2005 , Turner *et al.*, 2006) and iii) most grass-root riding centres were ineligible for FMD compensation (Crossman and Walsh, 2008),

giving the new entrant farmers a financial and competitive edge over riding centres (HCR, 2004: 56).

As most riding centres are rural-based they also face further economic constraints. Ward (2006: 13) suggested barriers facing traditional land-based businesses involve "low-wage/low-productivity equilibria, improving rural business performance, and raising rural household incomes". These barriers are explained as a linkage between operating in "low value-added markets" which can be argued as the current market position of riding centres and "the prevalence of low qualifications in some rural areas" hindering performance and growth opportunities (Ward, 2006: 4). This explanation is consistent with the barriers expressed by stakeholders in Box 2.1, where riding centres are characterised as small, family-run micro-businesses (ten or fewer staff), the business focuses on the horse not profit margins and, staff qualifications commence at National Vocational entry level (Lantra., 2006). Ward also noted that traditional land-based businesses are slow at embracing technological advances. For example, website development and social media for marketing purposes in contrast to urban-based micro-businesses (Galloway *et al.*, 2011: 261).

de Hoyos and Green, (2011: 172) have argued that all micro-businesses have faced similar barriers to growth since the financial crisis in 2008. These include recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified and skills staff and challenges of accessing the work place (transport constraint)(de Hoyos and Green, 2011: 172-4). Out migration of young people aged 15 to 29 from rural to urban areas (CRC., 2007) creates a further resource constraint for riding centres as the majority of staff tend to emanate from this age group (BHIC, 2005).

The exploration of these barriers and factors form a central part of this research in terms of what are the key barriers to business growth and increasing

participation? As the role of the horse shifted from agricultural and military purposes towards leisure-oriented activities, this places the horse-world in a position to capitalise on emerging market opportunities in the "new countryside" (Latimer and Birke, 2009).

2.5.2 Supply-side of participation – opportunities

Ironically, the opportunities for business growth identified by Bacon and Richards shown in Box 2.2 below mirror the barriers raised by a range of equestrian stakeholders in the Horse Strategy consultation (BHIC, 2005: 42-3). Yet, Bacon (2002b: 12) argued that despite opportunities for proprietors to acquire fully funded management training, through college or distance-based formats, enrolment remained low, with an overall lack of interest. The BHS also reported general apathy towards their management training seminars for approved riding centres (Michaels, 2002). This reluctance to engage with the business aspects of equestrianism can be linked to the Henley Centre Report's (2004: 4) observation of the horse-world's distrust toward official schemes in general. As Bacon (2002b: 4) puts it "[e]ven to equine people, the concept of being part of an industry is relatively recent and still sits uncomfortably with many, who prefer to see themselves as a part of "the horse-world". And it is acknowledged in the Horse Strategy that the horse-world requires "significantly greater cooperation between the various elements" in order to meet its full potential (BHIC, 2005: 26). This calls into question the potential for collaboration that is necessary to capitalise on opportunities for growth.

As Bacon (2002b: 31) pointed out, "new ideas must be developed to replace existing ones to keep ahead of competitors as customer expectations develop" particularly during the current financial crisis. Richards (2006: 24) suggested collaboration between riding centres and farmers is appropriate because of the level of shared knowledge and resources including "land, buildings, proximity to good riding countryside, animal husbandry skills, space, established equestrian

networks". This creates what the small business community refers to as "knowledge spill-overs", where interaction between "each enterprise is in some way different or unique … influences economic growth" (Burns, 2011: 11, Carter and Jones-Evans, 2006: 89-91).

Box 2.2 Opportunities for business growth

Riding school proprietors:

1. Gain approval from one of the representative organisations.
2. Adopt creative marketing: positioning strategies to gain a competitive advantage in the market.
3. Collaborate with the agricultural industry: exchange specialist knowledge, devise permissive toll rides for off-road routes.
4. Exploit the potential of Internet marketing: centres should have their own website linked to the BHS/ABRS and yell.co.uk sites. This has been found to be particularly advantageous for centres reliant on tourist trade.
5. Use management practices to improve standards and conditions of employment to attract and retain employees.
6. Develop targeted memberships, social activities and expand the range of product offering for peak, off-peak and high-spending clients within the leisure market.
7. Access training opportunities: Warwickshire Equine Based Internet Training (WEBIT) or distance learning courses.
8. Display health and safety policies and practices to retain confidence of clients and insurance underwriters.
9. Develop and adopt a robust business planning Horse Strategy.
10. Take advantage of professional advisors for strategic planning, marketing, etc.
11. Re-invest resources into management knowledge and skills, quality horses and instructors, refreshments, additional equine equipment and physical facilities.

(Adapted from Bacon, 2002b: 28-29, 33-34, Richards, 2006: 17, 28)

Representative organisations:

1. Focus on positive rather than dubious negative issues related to the industry.
2. Build positive dialogue with Government.
3. Proactively market riding for all, aiming to capitalise on the market potential for riding centres.
4. Provide relevant training for members to improve efficiency of riding centres.
5. Network and co-operation with other bodies representing small business to strengthen the lobbying power e.g. business rates.
6. Create a Chartered Institute to recognise and endorse industry standards.

(Adapted from Bacon, 2002b: 34, Richards, 2006: 28)

Existing evidence suggests a rather gloomy picture for the implementation of the Horse Strategy although there remain rays of hope in the shape of untapped markets and the potential for achieving greater efficiencies with existing resources. Several research agendas continue to attempt to establish the number of horses and participants in the UK; i) the next NES is due in 2015/16, ii) The Sport England annual Active People Survey, iii) BEF's research database (www.befred.org) and iv) the BHS regularly update an online "Equine Statistics" section available at www.bhs.org.uk. However, a casualty of the financial crisis has been the National Equine Database (NED) (Suggett, 2008). Officially launched in November 2008, NED was anticipated to create a comprehensive database of horses (a passport system) and participants in the UK. NED lost financial support from the government and Defra closed the database in September 2012 (Newsdesk, 2012). This has left the horse-world with no established database to benchmark numbers of horses and equestrian participants, leaving a continual challenge for the measurement of participation. However, one aspect of horse-world research which is gaining more attention is local-level equestrian participation studies initiated by local authorities, which I will now consider.

2.6 Local-level research

Several local authorities operate within the North East (NE) region and each has produced equine-related research as part of wider policies, such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP) (DCC. and LAF, 2006 , Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007 , Tyne and Wear Council Forum., 2005)[10]. One exception is the Tees Valley Strategy (TVS) (McAuley and McGee, 2005), a separate study focusing on the local equestrianism. The following sections will discuss these studies in

[10] LAF – Local Access Forum was established in November 2003 in response to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW 2000). The LAF focuses on public rights of way and access to the countryside in the local area through collaboration of local council members.

relation to increasing grassroots equestrian participation, a central focus of this thesis.

2.6.1 Durham Heritage Coast Bridleway Feasibility Study (DCC, 2003)

In collaboration with the BHS' national coastal access campaign aimed at improving riders access rights and provision (BHS., 2000), this wider coastal study was conducted in the NE region (DCC, 2003). The aim of the study was:

> "To identify existing access opportunities within the Durham Heritage Coast area, recommending improvements to provide safe, connected, attractive and sustainable primarily equestrian routes for the communities and visitors to the Durham coast"
>
> (DCC, 2003: 2)

The DCC (2003) study compared local access demand in order to gauge the level of equestrian participation in the area compared to national participation statistics in 2003 that estimated 2.4 million equestrian participants (BETA, 1999). However, the same issues of trying to produce local participation data resulted from i) the lack of official equestrian micro-level data, ii) patchy cooperation with the study, for example "disenfranchised" grassroots equestrians could not be contacted (DCC, 2003: 3). This led Durham Country Council to conclude that a communication network was required (DCC, 2003: 2), as reflected later in the Horse Strategy. Following the DCC (2003) study, the demand for equestrian rights of way in the area was brought to the local authority's attention and further research took place in 2006, published in 2009 (DCC and LAF, 2009) discussed in the following section.

2.6.2 Easington Equestrian Study (DCC and LAF, 2009)

In 2006, a consultation exercise between Policy Officers, the local access forum and equestrian riding groups (BHS) informed the Easington study. The research involved the distribution of 300 questionnaires to known grassroots establishments (riding centres and livery yards) to evaluate access requirements.

187 were returned (62% response rate). In February 2007, these responses were "mapped" to identify the level of equestrian demand for access to route networks. This participation map informed the development of the later (2009) study and subsequently fed into the RoWIP for County Durham 2007-2011 (DCC. and LAF, 2006). The objectives focused on assessing equestrian demand, participation rates and the implications for route access, specifically focusing on the Easington District's "Access and Rights of Way network…and how we could improve it" (DCC and LAF, 2009: 4).

The study found: i) problems in gathering robust grassroots equestrian data for the Durham area, ii) only cooperative grassroots equestrians were willing to participate in the study, iii) the following participation barriers were found; incidents with speeding motorists (50%), accidents involving vehicles (22%) and illegal use of public footpaths (20%) and iv) low levels (11%) of BHS membership. The recommendations called for further collaboration with grassroots equestrians and advocated BHS membership as a method of improving equestrian communication networks (DCC and LAF, 2009: 12).

2.6.3 Tyne and Wear Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2007-11: Equestrian Access Survey (EAS) (2007)

Adopting a different approach to the Durham area, the EAS (2007) concentrated specifically on route requirements and improvement, through a collaborative partnership between Public Rights of Way Officers (policy officers), the Tyne and Wear Joint Local Access Forum and Bridleway Groups. Through this partnership, the authorities agreed to enable "equestrian activity to take place…on the road and bridleway network through the promotion and creation of regional, borough and local bridle route networks…[via] RoWIP" (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007: 12). The EAS served a strategic function as a frame of reference for local authorities to evaluate grassroots equestrian demand for route access while identifying future improvement to the network(s). This approach included statistical analysis of the "types" of demand reported in the survey: "expressed

demand" based on the percentage of the population participating in equestrianism (see below) and "latent demand", if more network routes were available would this remove a barrier to increased participation? (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007: 3).

The EAS (2007) also included analysis of the General Household Survey 2002, Countryside Agency Rights of Way Use & Demand Survey 2001, the Young Peoples' Participation in Sport in England (MORI) 1994, 1999, 2002 and the NES (BETA, 2006) to situate local participation rates within the national context. The analysis was supplemented with qualitative case studies to identify issues for grassroots equestrians for discussion with the local authority to identify the key issues for development (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007: 9). The partnership between grassroots equestrians and policy officers continues as part of the ongoing RoWIP process, developing and improving route access. However, no research has been commissioned to specifically capture the number of riders and horses in the area. The focus remains within the remit of RoWIP and increasing participation through increased access to off-road route networks. By contrast, the Tees Valley region commissioned a study to evaluate local "leisure sector" or grassroots equestrianism.

2.6.4 A Strategy for the Equestrian leisure sector in the Tees Valley (2005)

As part of the Draft Equestrian Strategy consultation process (Redcar and Cleveland., 2005), the Tees Valley Strategy (TVS) study was commissioned (McAuley and McGee, 2005). TVS was a "snap-shot" research design (between February-April 2005) involving interviews across 173 sites (riding centres and livery yards) proprietors (37) and representatives of agencies and organisations (34) (rights of way officers, bridleway and riding groups). Questionnaires evaluating horse ownership, costs, access issues, road incidents and road safety certification were distributed. Interviews and questionnaires were informed by

prior analysis of 22 regional and local policy documents to define the research criteria.

The specific aims of the study were to: i) increase awareness amongst Local Authority planning and transport staff of equestrian demands and needs, ii) highlight the ability of equestrianism to contribute social cohesion, well-being and environmental sustainability between rural/urban fringe areas, and iii) raise awareness to equestrians of the Single Payment (Environmental Stewardship) and Rural Development Schemes to assist business growth (McAuley and McGee, 2005: 3). Resembling a small-scale Henley Centre Report (2004), TVS focused on three key areas expected to contribute towards the sustainable development of the leisure sector (grassroots): i) quantify the scale of the leisure sector and its contribution to the local economy; ii) identify demand for off-road network access and development requirements and iii) examine local planning policies such as RoWIP to consider the inclusion of equestrian demands and barriers to participation (McAuley and McGee, 2005: 3).

Similar data collection issues facing the Henley Centre Report (2004) arose; lack of communication networks, lack of reliable data and fragmentation. Researchers stated that to locate establishments "it was easier to drive down a lane and see new signs which could just be "tacked to a fence". This led to "cold-calling" at properties in order to gain information (McAuley and McGee, 2005: 13). Researchers also reported open distrust and resistance toward engaging with the TVS and respondents expressed the view that it "would not benefit" local equestrianism (McAuley and McGee, 2005: 13). The analysis revealed that industry and equestrian needs were "virtually invisible" within policy directives (McAuley and McGee, 2005: 11). These findings lent support to the first three aims of the Horse Strategy - bringing the industry together, increasing participation and boosting the economic performance of businesses (BHIC, 2005: 11-17). The TVS made twelve recommendations, which involved improving

communication networks, appointing a lead representative body (e.g. BHS) to oversee development at the local-level and the establishment of collaborative partnerships between equestrian and local authority stakeholders to fund development (McAuley and McGee, 2005: 25-30).

Combined findings from (DCC, 2003 , DCC and LAF, 2009 , DCC. and LAF, 2006), (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007) and (TVS, McAuley and McGee, 2005) revealed a growing awareness within local authorities of grassroots equestrian demands, participation and barriers to increasing participation and suggested the potential economic contribution equestrianism could make to the local economy. Currently, authorities focus attention on improving off-road route access as part of wider planning and transportation policy (RoWIP). Yet, despite progress in local research, progress toward implementing the Horse Strategy objectives at local-level remained slow. The challenge is to engage the 'resistant' or 'disenfranchised' grassroots equestrians, in order to understand what influences participation, where it takes place and how to improve access to participation, remained.

2.7 Conclusion

Little empirical research exists exploring the range of factors which influence the choice to participate in equestrianism (Lessick *et al.*, 2004 , Pauw, 2000 , Wipper, 2000). The limited available research in conjunction with the wider sports participation literature, suggests that the decision to choose to participate in sport is a highly individualised and complex process (Downward and Riordan, 2007 , Farrell and Shields, 2002). Determinant factors of "age", "gender", "income", "household" (tastes) and "spill-over" effects (Downward and Riordan, 2007) "personal, interpersonal and societal/structural" constraints (Ravenscroft, 2004) and "life-stage shifts" (Sport England., 2005) combine to influence sports, and arguably equestrian, participation decisions. These factors that influence

decisions to participate are brought together in the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) which I use in this study to gain a more sophisticated understanding of why people participate in equestrianism.

In chapter three, I focus on the second challenge of implementation - engaging equestrians with the Horse Strategy, and I draw on key theories and debates relevant to policy implementation.

3. Engaging equestrians with the Horse Strategy

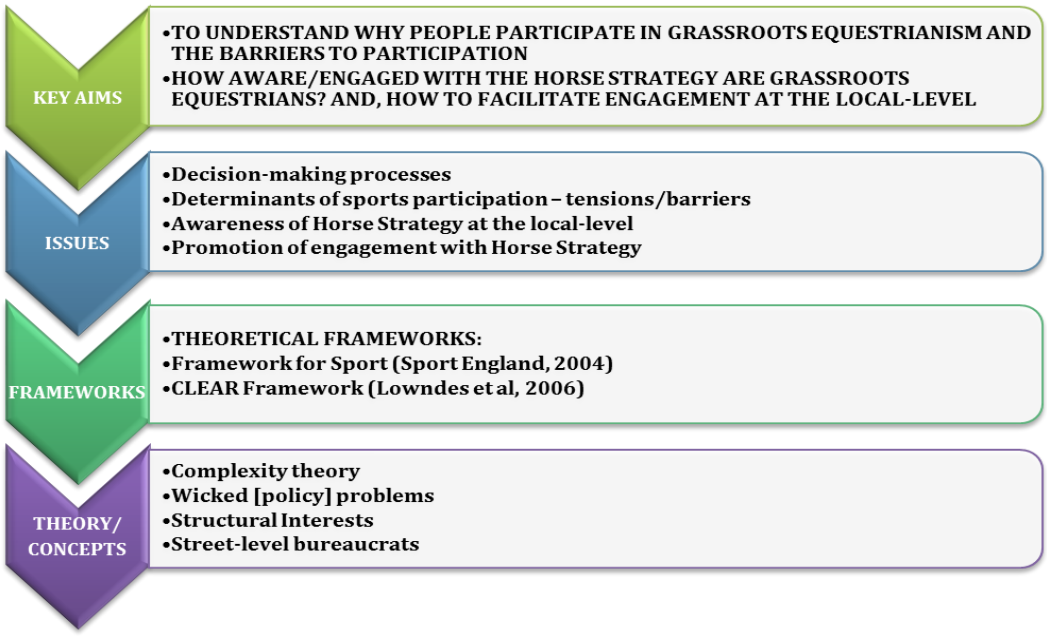
3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the second challenge for the BHIC and Defra, the implementation of the Horse Strategy. I start by discussing approaches to policy implementation and then introduce key theories and concepts that will be used throughout the thesis to analyse the implementation process. In sections 3.2 and 3.3 I introduce complexity theory by conceptualising the challenge of transforming the horse-world into an industry as a complex (Byrne, 1998 , Geyer and Rihani, 2010) and "wicked" (Rittel and Webber, 1973) policy problem. Successful implementation of the Strategy involves an understanding of how to change the behaviour of different interest groups within the horse-world (Alford, 1975).

In section 3.4, I use Alford's (1975) notion of "structural interests" to identify the roles played by the BHIC and Defra and equine organisations managing policy implementation (BHIC, Defra and the BEF). This approach places an emphasis on how organisations govern and regulate the horse-world by maintaining resources and decision-making processes at the macro- and meso-levels of the hierarchy (Alexander *et al.*, 1992 , Berman, 1978). Staying with the role of equine organisations in ensuring that the Horse Strategy's implementation is successful, in section 3.6, I explore Lipsky's (1980) concept of the "street-level bureaucrat". Lipsky argued that the behaviour of people in front line roles at local-level (this includes regional representatives (equine organisations), local authority policy officers and grassroots proprietors) have a degree of influence over how policy is implemented. Finally, in section 3.7, I outline the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 281), and how it can be used to analyse levels of engagement and/or recommend methods to increase equestrians' engagement with the Horse Strategy. I explain how this framework complements the "Framework for Sport" (Sport England., 2004b) in developing a deeper understanding of the two policy challenges (increasing participation and engagement with the Strategy for successful implementation) in this thesis.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the conceptual and theoretical frameworks informing this study.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual and theoretical frameworks



I start by discussing the background to policy implementation research and the longstanding debate between top-down and bottom-up approaches for successful implementation.

3.1.1 Approaches to policy implementation

Over the past forty years different schools of thought have emerged within the academic literature surrounding how best to implement policy, in particular, the complexity of implementation and the "top-down/bottom-up" methodological debate (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 44). This debate includes consideration of how policy makers formulate policy, and how best to implement policy given the complexity of engaging a wide range of actors, logistics, and cultural barriers and constraints in order to achieve policy objectives. In the first tranche of studies in the 1970's and 1980's, implementation was largely viewed from a top-down perspective (Bardach, 1974 , Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). This involved, a

linear progression from translating the policy "goals and the means for achieving them" in a literal sense through exploring the linkages between official institutions, departments and the extent of their co-operation creating "implementation chains" (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984: xxi). Pressman & Wildavsky (1984: xxi) argued that linkages between elements of the implementation chain should be as close to 100 percent as possible, if not then small deficits may appear which aggregate into a larger "implementation deficit" or gap. By analysing the closeness of the implementation chain relationships, the probability of successful policy implementation could then be analysed. In a series of studies, Mazmanian and Sabatier systematically broke down the policy process into elements of formation and implementation to examine how policy objectives were achieved over time and why (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983 , Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979, 1980).

These studies called into question the validity of the top-down approach in explaining policy implementation and Sabatier (1986: 22) turned to "bottom-up" literature where policy analysis started with the "operational [local] level" actors and examined the "strategies" these actors adopted to implement policy objectives. He had earlier described the bottom-up approach where policy-makers were expected to consider "street-level bureaucrats[11] and target groups" as "pessimistic" mechanisms when top-down methods suggested that these cohorts "could be kept within acceptable bounds over time" (Sabatier, 1986: 25). But he concluded that top-down approaches "neglect strategic initiatives coming from the private sector, from street-level bureaucrats or local implementing officials, and … other policy subsystems" suggesting that stakeholder engagement is essential to successful implementation. This led Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993: 3-4) to create a comprehensive model which combined "linkages, drives and influences that form the essential core of theoretical models ... for moving the [implementation] process from one stage to another". This

[11] A term derived from Lipsky (1980)

model was developed into The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) which informed approaches to policy design and implementation (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993 , Sabatier and Weible, 2007).

Agreeing that "advocacy coalitions" between actors within the "layers" of policy implementation can be formed, Hill and Hupe (2009: 62-63) have questioned some aspects of the ACF. In particular, they argue that focusing on the formation of coalitions "tend to mask the significance of conflict within the policy process" (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 62) and differentiating between policy formation and implementation has, given the complexity of the policy process, led to a research "dilemma" rendering the ACF as "rigorous but narrowly conceived" (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 63).

The evolution of policy implementation literature raises several points in analysing the implementation of the Horse Strategy. First, several groups of stakeholders with diverse interests have been identified, and while linkages between groups can exist, the Henley Centre Report (2004: 57) found evidence to suggest significant "fragmentation". Second, similar to the ACF (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993 , Sabatier and Weible, 2007) approach, the BHIC and Defra have called for collaboration between all equestrians to ensure successful implementation. But, the implementation process employs a typical top-down method, from the BHIC and Defra to regional representatives (equine organisations) to grassroots equestrians. In adopting a top-down approach, as Hill and Hupe (2009: 62) pointed out, this method has diverted attention away from the potential conflict and complexity involved in policy implementation. I now turn to discuss complexity and 'wicked problems' and their relevance for analysing the implementation of the Horse Strategy.

3.2 Complexity theory

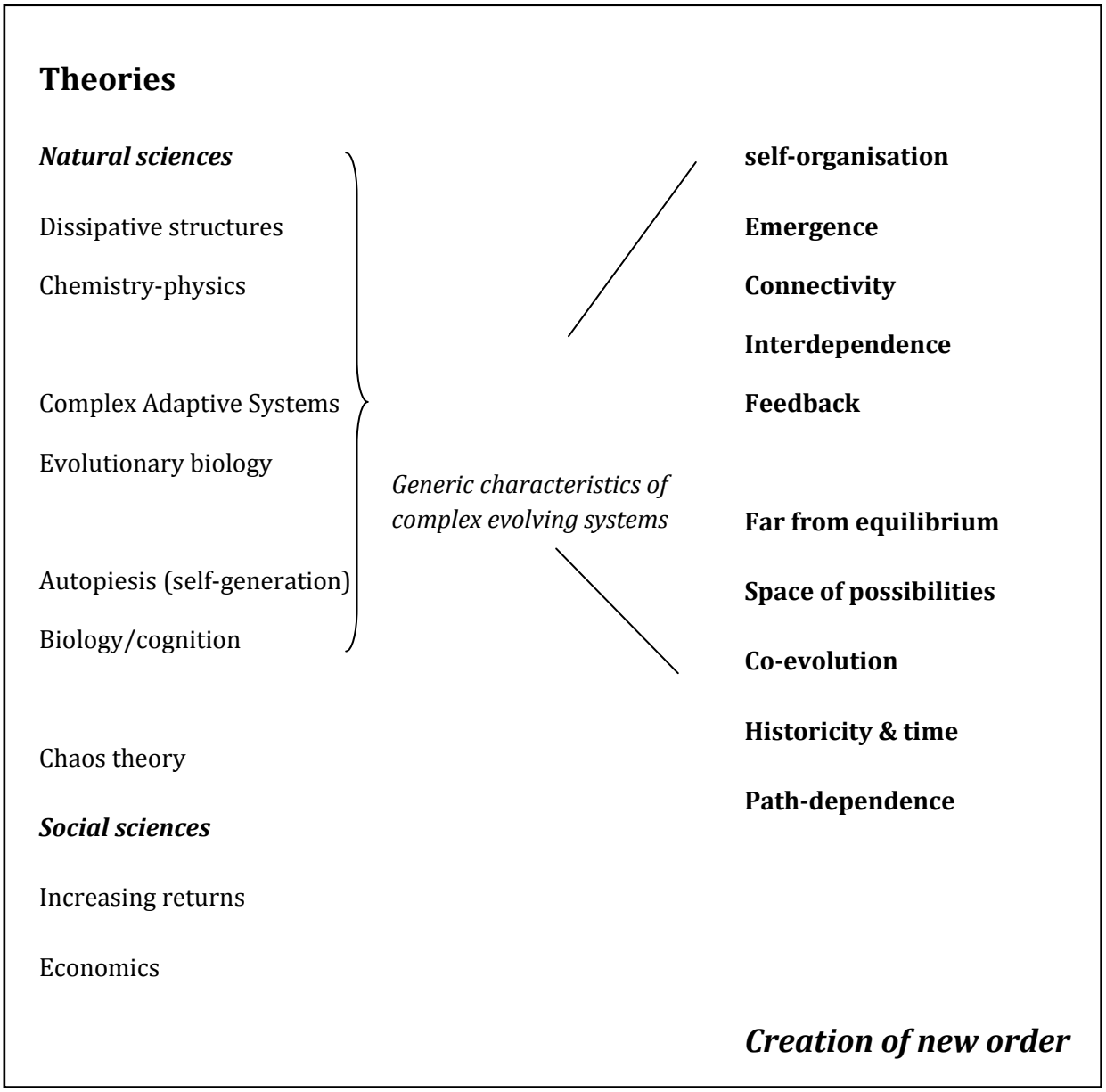
Defining complexity is, ironically, complex. As Byrne and Callaghan (in press, 2013: 1) state "[c]omplexity has its own terminology and draws on a range of disciplines and fields as sources for it...Nobody (in the sense of discipline) owns this stuff". By this they mean that rather than confining knowledge within one field of expertise such as the natural sciences or social sciences, complexity explores a variety of concepts and theories in order to develop a multi-level understanding of "reality". Complexity theory does not represent a search for "completeness" rather "complex thought aspires to a multidimensional knowledge" and importantly, embodies "the recognition of the links between the entities that our thought must necessarily distinguish, but not isolate from each other" (Morin, 2008: 100).

In drawing knowledge from diverse sources, complexity theory has received criticism for failing to clearly "define its central concepts" (Mitchell, 2011: 14). Its key concepts, terminology and exploration centre around "systems, complexity, emergence and theory" (Byrne and Callaghan, in press, 2013: 1). And, Mitchell (2011: 14) accepts that complexity theory is "forming a new science" which is multi-faceted while offering a "cutting-edge" to social science for a holistic understanding of "reality". In the next sections I show the relevance of complexity theory for an analysis of the implementation of the Horse Strategy.

The horse-world is conceptualised as a "conscious complex system" (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 69). "Conscious" reflects the existence of numerous "human actors" (grassroots equestrians) involved in the "complex system" (horse-world) and describes the "fluid nature" of human behaviour which, because of agency - the "cognitive ability to choose" to engage with the Horse Strategy, creates a level of uncertainty surrounding successful implementation (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 68).

Figure 3.1 below illustrates complexity theory's positioning, in order to gain multi-dimensional knowledge and understanding of social reality from various theoretical perspectives.

Figure 3.2: Development of a complexity perspective (adapted from Mitleton-Kelly, 2003b: 24)



How can a perception of the horse-world as a conscious complex system, and use of complexity theory, assist in analysing the implementation of the Horse Strategy? From a complexity perspective, the world is a complicated self-

organising system; the "various elements that make up the system maintain a degree of interdependence from one another" (Miller and Page, 2007:9). Should one element of a complicated system be removed, the system would continue to exist but in a "slightly compromised" format (Miller and Page, 2007:9). Crucially, "complicated worlds are reducible, whereas complex ones are not" they adapt in unpredictable ways (Byrne, 1998 , Crawford *et al.*, 2005 , Miller and Page, 2007:9). Byrne (1998: 5-6) has argued that complexity theory is ideally suited for sociological investigation as linearity and order seem forced on a world which isn't really like that.

As human beings we continuously engage in interaction and interpretation not only with fellow humans, but also with biological and physiological environments (complex systems) at any given point in time (Byrne, 2005: 96). Humans can interpret interactions differently based on individual subjective norms and values, providing a disorderly and unpredictable conscious complex system (Geyer and Rihani, 2010). This led Geyer and Rihani (2010: 29) to suggest that a conscious complex system comprises of the following features:

Partial order: phenomena can exhibit both orderly and chaotic behaviours.

Reductionism and holism: some phenomena are reducible others are not.

Predictability and uncertainty: phenomena can be partially modelled, predicted and controlled.

Probabilistic: there are general boundaries to most phenomena, but within these boundaries exact outcomes are uncertain.

Emergence: they exhibit elements of adaptation and emergence.

Interpretation: the actors in the system can be aware of themselves, the system and their history and may strive to interpret and direct themselves and the system (non-linear).

Within the conscious complex system actors can adapt to their environment, learn and emerge with different behaviours, but the exact nature of the how they will behave is unpredictable, in other words, complex.

As a conscious complex system, the horse-world does not operate in isolation, it is "nested" within environmental complex systems; the horse-industry, and wider society (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003a). As a conscious complex system the horse-world system adapts to external forces, the "patterns of power and economic relations in the wider society," which shape local-level interaction (Stacey and Griffin, 2005: 8). For example, over the past decade the horse-world has had to adapt to the external environmental effects of Foot and Mouth disease (Hillyard, 2006), the farmer diversification scheme (Crossman and Walsh, 2008 , Turner *et al.*, 2006 , Turner *et al.*, 2003), the Hunting Act introduced in February 2005 (Milbourne, 2003 , Newsdesk, 2010 , Ward, 1999) and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review (HMTreasury, 2010) following the financial crisis of 2008. Therefore in analysing the implementation of the Horse Strategy, a complexity approach must necessarily be concerned with local-level interactions:

> "In their local interaction people will always be particularizing, taking up in their local interactions, these generalizations, and they may not be aware of doing so. No one can step outside of interaction to design that interaction, and from this perspective it does not make sense to think of leaders setting directions or designing widespread patterns of interaction which they can then realize. When leaders set directions or formulate organizational designs, they are in effect articulating what Mead means by social objects and cult values. What happens as a result of doing this depends upon how people take up such social objects and cult values in their local interactions with each other"
>
> (Stacey and Griffin, 2005: 8)

As Stacey and Griffin pointed out, when leaders attempt to re-design interactions and systems (horse-world) this can be met with resistance to the challenges to valued aspects of culture (Birke, 2008 , HCR, 2004).

3.2.1 Complexity theory and policy implementation

Haynes (2003) has applied complexity theory to investigate management practices within local authorities. This involved looking at how local authorities

implement change (either internal or external policy) at local-level. He argued that:

> "[c]hange is about the resolution and management of emerging conflict and tension, in that there are different views and ideas about where the organization and its workers should be heading. While there is no single absolute truth about which way the organization goes, the key point is that the organization must evolve to keep pace with external change, so that is does not become redundant and sub-optimal … It is the *overall ability of the organization to change* rather than the specifics about how it is done that is important"
>
> (Haynes, 2003: 73)

He described human interaction within organizations as a "*dynamic* and a *living process*; it can only be partly controlled by formal and informal sanctions" (Haynes, 2003: 41). We can see that the internal organisational environment Haynes described links to the earlier point that the horse-world as part of the organisational structure of the envisaged horse-industry operates in an environment where both regional representatives and grassroots equestrians have to adapt accordingly in order to implement the Horse Strategy. If these conscious complex systems lack the ability to change, successful implementation looks unlikely. From a complexity perspective, evaluating policy system (such as transforming the horse-world):

> "[p]laces particular emphasis on forming a holistic viewpoint of the system and the interaction of different components over time in a changing process. It seeks to describe a whole policy system and its externalities, as much as understanding the detail within it. A complexity research project that seeks to examine a policy system will hesitate to put artificial time horizons around what is evaluated, but prefers to see the historical context from which the policy system has evolved. The focus is as much on evaluating an evolving policy process as it is on the ends of current outputs and outcomes of policy"
>
> (Haynes, 2008: 403)

Furthermore, Callaghan (2008), in examining a role for complexity theory in policy evaluation has argued that complexity theory has created "one important development … in providing us with an alternative way of understanding the

world within which attempts at engineering are designed" (Callaghan, 2008: 400). By reviewing approaches to linear policy evaluation before implementation Callaghan (2008: 410) argued that earlier empirical studies of policy evaluation have identified individual problems and proposed quick solutions (much like the BHIC and Defra's approach to reviewing the Henley Centre Report (2004) and designing the Strategy). This has led to lost opportunities for "looking … and develop[ing] a dialogue at the local level, acknowledging the structures and forces of relative permanence as well as those of contingency" which combine to impact on both the policy evaluation and implementation process. Although few specific policy implementation studies have incorporated complexity theory, Rittel and Webber's notion of "wicked problems" shares similar concepts, which I will now describe.

3.3 Wicked problems and complexity

Rittel and Webber (1973) first used the term "wicked problem" to describe the multiple flaws they identified when using linear methods to implement policy in a town planning environment. They suggested that linear methods were designed to address "tame" problems such as easily defined and resolved engineering matters (Rittel and Webber, 1973: 155). By contrast, "wicked" problems were complex in nature, associated with multiple social environments and actors with unpredictable behaviour and outcomes, making them difficult to define let alone resolve (Rittel and Webber, 1973: 155). In addition, wicked problems are associated with attempts by professionals charged with gaining the necessary consensus for successful policy implementation. And, this in turn can lead to strong resentment by stakeholders and increase resistance to policy implementation (Rittel and Webber, 1973: 155-6). The similarities to the concept of a conscious complex system are striking – multiple actors, unpredictable behaviour, while successful implementation is contingent upon engaging stakeholders.

Wicked problems are not evil *per se,* rather they are problems which are "highly resistant to resolution" (Roberts, 2009: 353). Conklin, (2006: 19) expressed the distinction between tame and wicked problems as follows:

Tame problem:

1. Has a relatively well-defined and stable problem statement;
2. Has a definite stopping point, i.e. we know when a solution is reached;
3. Has a solution which can be objectively evaluated as being right or wrong;
4. Belongs to a class of similar problems which can be solved in a similar manner;
5. Has solutions which can be tried and abandoned;
6. Comes with a limited set of alternative solutions.

(Conklin, 2006: 18-19)

Wicked problem:

1. You don't understand the problem until you have developed a solution;
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule;
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not right or wrong;
4. Every wicked problem is essentially unique and novel;
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation";
6. Wicked problems have no given alternative solutions.

(Conklin, 2006: 14-16)

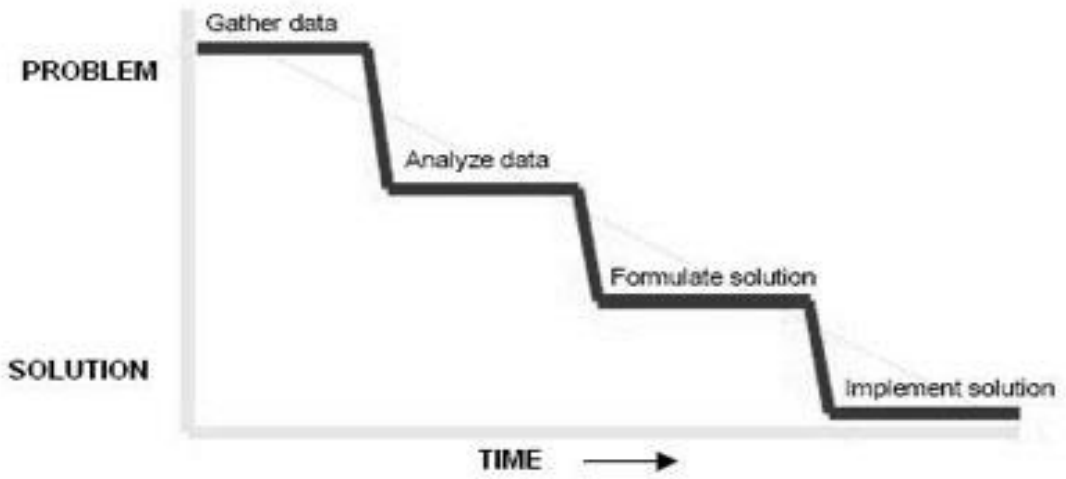
He added a caveat that at the outset of problems you "can't tell … if a problem is going to be wicked" the issues only emerge "once you get into them" – for instance, during policy implementation (Conklin, 2006: 16). Conklin accepted that not all wicked problems will conform to these criteria and may contain a combination of tame and wicked components. In the context of policy implementation Conklin found aspects of order, disorder and complexity. Policy makers tended to rely upon top-down linear implementation methods, but ignored the possibility of an unpredictable (disorderly) response from stakeholders (Conklin, 2006: 8-9).

Combining notions of complexity and wicked problems provides a multi-dimensional insight into implementing the Horse Strategy. Complexity:

> "Necessarily places human social agency as of crucial historical and potential significance for the constitution of planetary reality as a whole, precisely because human agency can change system trajectory...Complexity science addresses issues of causation with cause, necessarily, understood as complex and contingent"
>
> (Byrne, 2005: 97)

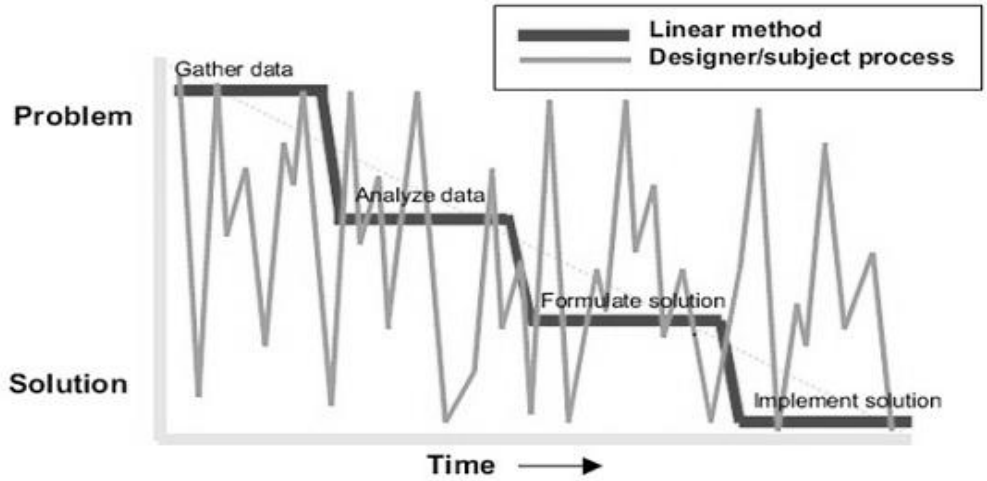
It is useful to consider the implications of Byrne's thought in relation to policy implementation - the success of the Horse Strategy is directly contingent upon engaging equestrians. Conklin (2006) argued that to increase engagement, policy-makers must acknowledge that policy problems are not tame, but inherently complex, i.e. wicked. Figure 3.2 below, illustrates the traditional linear top-down "waterfall" management method for policy implementation (Conklin, 2006: 9).

Figure 3.3: Traditional wisdom for solving complex problems: the "waterfall" (Conklin, 2006: 9)



One immediate flaw in this model is that it is too simplistic when conscious human actors are introduced. Figure 3.3 below, demonstrates the impact of introducing ***one*** human into the policy implementation process.

Figure 3.4: Pattern of cognitive activity of **one** designer: the "jagged" line (Conklin, 2006: 10)



If we multiply this effect by millions of grassroots equestrians, and the task of successfully implementing the Horse Strategy becomes clear.

While wicked problems cannot be solved Geyer and Rihani (2010: 69) argue that they can be managed through "real *stakeholder involvement"*. They argue that complex policies are rarely implemented successfully within a hierarchical organisational structure that "separates stakeholders from decision-makers by layers of bureaucrats and "experts":

> "[l]ife [is] uncomfortable for decision-makers and experts sitting at the top of the pyramid. Even if they are saintly in their devotion to the public good they are faced with continuously shifting messages from those they serve as to the nature of "problems" and "solutions". They are obviously in a difficult situation, and as more complexity is added with the passage of time the more their position becomes untenable"
>
> (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 68)

The management aspect of complex wicked policy problems "currently overwhelms most current problem-solving and managerial approaches" (Australian Government., 2007: 3-4, Conklin, 2006 , Roberts, 2000, 2004). On the one hand, BHIC and Defra have attempted to "manage" the implementation process and influence stakeholder behaviour through the introduction of

"traditional levers"; legislation, penalties (horse passport fines, etc.), and proposed taxes (Australian Government., 2007: 4). On the other hand, this approach is argued as forming a necessary but insufficient part of a solution to resolve the wicked problem. Evidence suggests that the key factor in managing complex wicked policy problems is collaboration (iterative engagement, ownership and discussion), as problems tend to be "imperfectly understood" by stakeholders (Horn and Weber, 2007: 4-5, Roberts, 2004). In relation to implementing the Horse Strategy, what is relevant is the inability of the BHIC and Defra to predict the responses of grassroots equestrians as "nothing really bounds the problem-solving process - it is experienced as ambiguous, fluid, complex, political, and frustrating as hell" (Roberts, 2009: 354).

We can see here that because of the complex and wicked aspects of implementing the Horse Strategy – stakeholder engagement is key, but this is contingent upon grassroots equestrians being aware of, and engaging with, the Strategy (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 45, Lane, 1987: 543). Reflecting Byrne's (2005a: 97) argument that human social agency must be placed at the centre systems, Geyer and Rihani have further argued that "stakeholder involvement and the reiterative processes that recycles through all stages" of implementation are vital in managing complex wicked policy problems. This led them to adopt a joint approach that combines complexity and the notion of wicked problems as an appropriate method of analysing policy implementation:

> "A complexity perspective is essential in helping one to … choose the right methods for responding to the particular systems/problems/ solutions … [and to] illustrate the inadequacies of jumping to the wrong conclusion by treating complex systems as orderly, mechanistic phenomena. The astonishing point ... is the lengths to which decision-makers have gone to ignore the shortcomings of current practices, the subsequent enormous costs of such orderly interpretations and strategies and how a complexity perspective and some of its tools could have been used to avoid or correct these failings"

In Conklin's (2006: 4) words a wicked problem is characterised in part by stakeholders who "don't even realize that there are incompatible tacit assumptions about the problem, and each believes that his or her understandings are complete and shared by all". Evidence from both the complexity and wicked problems literature with relevance for the implementation of the Horse Strategy has shown that it is not straightforward and prompts the following question: How do equine organisations (BHS and ABRS) tasked with implementation at grassroots level manage the responsibility of developing grassroots engagement? In 2006, approximately ninety five percent of equestrians were not affiliated to an equine organisation, despite efforts to encourage membership (see BETA, 2006 , Richards, 2006: 18-19). This presented the equine organisations with several challenges: i) co-operating with each other, ii) convincing members and non-members to engage with policy and iii) funding the additional activities associated with their role as implementers. An exploration of these challenges forms part of the empirical study in this thesis.

Despite the clear diversity of interests in the horse-world, there is an implicit assumption in the content of the Horse Strategy that there is a perceived unity and shared vision throughout the horse-world - welcoming the transition to an industry (BHIC, 2005: 8). In the following section, I explore the literature on structural interests and its application to the research problem – the implementation of the Horse Strategy.

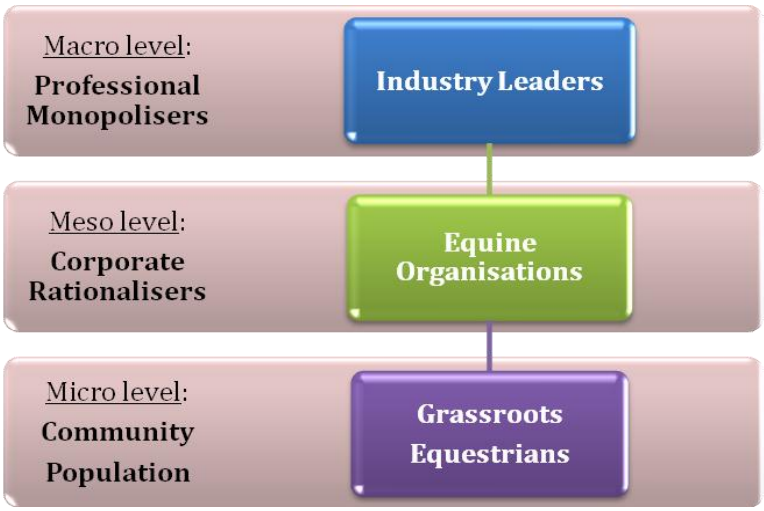
3.4 Structural interests in the horse-world

Alford (1975: xiii) first coined the term "strategically structured interest" in relation to the power dynamic of those leading health system reforms (in the United States). He contended that whether the system was considered to be "fragmented or pluralistic" there existed "a continuing struggle between major structural interests operating within the context of a market society –

"professional monopolists" controlling the major health resources, "corporate rationalisers" challenging their power, and the community population seeking better health care" (Alford, 1975: xiv).

Critically evaluating previous research on political engagement and public policy, Alford and Friedland (1975) introduced the concept of structural vested interests into thinking about power, social class and influence in policy implementation. They argued that those in monopolist positions retained influence and power over major resources and decisions at policy level. The invitation of the monopolisers to the community population to participate politically amounted to no more than "symbolic responses" that represented another layer of "social control" (Alford and Friedland, 1975: 472). Alford and Friedland (1975: 472) stated that where previous political engagement has resulted in perceived ineffectual meeting of non-dominant needs, subsequent "low-levels of engagement" particularly amongst "lower-income individuals" is an unsurprising result, despite these "political channels" offering their only opportunity "to achieve power". There is a clear analogy here which can be applied to the horse-world context: the monopolisers – BHIC and Defra; the corporate rationalisers – the equine organisations (BEF, BHS, ABRS, etc.) and the community population – grassroots equestrians.

Figure 3.5: The basic horse-world structure (informed by Alexander *et al.*, 1992)



Alford and Friendland (1975: 472) noted, unsurprisingly that low engagement from the community population was because this group did not have their interests served or represented in a meaningful way. They have subsequently been criticised for not clearly defining which interests are specifically "repressed" by the monopolisers (Checkland *et al.*, 2009 , North, 1995). Nonetheless, structural interests research has continued to be applied in the analysis of health care policy reforms (Duckett, 1984 , Lewis, 2006 , North and Peckham, 2001). For the horse-world, we are dealing with a hierarchy which facilitates potential distinctions between the structural interests for each equine organisation which seeks to maintain its relative position (of power) through what is termed "interest-group politics" (Alford, 1975: 9). This in turn creates a network of political, legal and economic activities within the horse-world structure that can guarantee that certain dominant interests are maintained. As Mechanic pointed out there is:

> "[A] variety of interest groups that tend to view priorities from their own particular perspectives and interests, and it is enormously difficult to achieve a consensus. Groups are usually reluctant to yield rights and privileges that they have already exercised, and will resist significant restructuring unless it appears that there is something in it for them"
>
> (Cited in Alford, 1975 Mechanic, 1974: 6)

On Teesside, McAuley and McGee (2005: 13) found evidence of "interest group" mentality as grassroots equestrians dismissed any perceived "benefits" from policy engagement and preserved their interest in the established horse-world. The call for all "responsible equestrians" to unite and ensure the successful implementation of the Horse Strategy ignores the complexity of policy implementation (BHIC, 2005: 8). This prompts the question: is the transformation of the horse-world into an industry only serving the vested interests of the BHIC and Defra and equine organisations? As Mechanic (1974) observed, interest groups usually engage in policy implementation when there is "something in it for them". As Alford and Friedland (1975: 430) have drawn

attention to the impact of how "historically created structures condition and limit the ranges of action possible not only by individual citizens but also by organisations and groups" in the horse-world, a strong sense of "horsey" culture (Birke, 2007 , Latimer and Birke, 2009) is likely to limit attempts at reorganisation by the BHIC and Defra (professional monopolisers) and equine organisations (corporate rationalisers). In this context, grassroots equestrians (community population) are in a strong position to influence the success or otherwise of the Horse Strategy.

In the following section, I turn to Lipsky's (1980) notion of "street-level bureaucracy" that refers to the power of 'front-line' individuals in interpreting 'policy' and exercising discretion in ways that are consistent with the values of front line practitioners. In the context of the horse-world the front line practitioners are regional representatives (equine organisations), local authority policy officers and riding centre proprietors.

3.5 Street-level bureaucracy

The behaviour, personality, and interactions of individuals appointed to street-level bureaucrat positions are examined. More specifically, how street-level bureaucrats interpret, follow rules and regulations, or circumvent constraints to establish a degree of independence within their role (Lipsky, 1976, 1980). What defines a street-level bureaucrat, and how is this applicable for examining the roles of the local authority policy officers, regional representatives (equine organisations), grassroots proprietors, staff and equestrians within the horse-world? Lipsky (1976: 197) characterised a street-level bureaucrat as follows:

1. Called upon to interact constantly with citizens in the regular course of his job.
2. Although he works within a bureaucratic structure, his independence on the job is fairly extensive. One component of this independence is discretion in making decisions; but independence is not limited to discretion. The attitude and

> general approach of the street-level bureaucrat toward the citizen may affect the individual significantly. These considerations are broader than the term discretion suggests.
>
> 3. Having a fairly extensive potential impact on citizens with whom he deals.

Resistance to change through agency is also an important aspect of Lipsky's theory (1980: 161):

> "The essence of street-level bureaucracies is that they require people to make decisions about other people. Street-level bureaucrats have discretion because the nature of service provision calls for human judgement that cannot be programmed and for which machines cannot substitute"

Lipsky (1980: xii) sees top-down (leadership) concerns as being of secondary importance because "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures" directly impact on implementation at local-level. And, individuals can be appointed to key roles based on personality traits predisposed towards adherence and enforcement of rules and regulations (Lipsky, 1980: 197). However, Lipsky (1980) conceded that discretion is too simple an explanation for how street-level bureaucrats' behaviour can impact on the level of service provided. Linked to Alford's (1975) notion of structural interests, street-level bureaucrat behaviour and decisions can maintain their own interests and position in an organisation.

Hill and Hupe, (2009: 52) have argued that Lipsky's concept of street-level bureaucracy rendered:

> "[t]he preoccupation of the top-down perspective ... beside the point... for him, the implementation of policy is really about street-level workers with high service ideals exercising discretion under intolerable pressures. Therefore, attempts to control them hierarchically, simply increases their tendency to stereotype and disregard the needs of their clients"

This prompts the question: how do the BHIC and Defra ensure that equine organisations collaborate to engage grassroots equestrians with the Horse Strategy? As Prottas (1978: 286) pointed out "the process of categorising the client as a basis for providing assistance, the human services agency, the service provider, and the client all have an interest in how the client is categorised and each strives to influence that decision". Necessarily, the decisions regional representatives (equine organisations) or local authority policy officers make impacts on implementation while the officers "public responsibility" is to serve their respective leaders, organisation and clients (Prottas, 1978: 286). Prottas (1978: 292) argued that:

> "[t]here are complex patterns of conflict between the street-level bureaucrat and the organisation of which he is a part. The source of this conflict is structural, springing from the differing perspectives of the different roles within the organization"

This links to Alford's (1975) structural interests forming part of a "conscious complex system" operating within bureaucracies (equine organisations and local authorities) (Hill and Hupe, 2009). As the equine organisations are expected to collaborate to implement the Horse Strategy, Prottas' observations are thought provoking:

> "Before a bureaucracy attempts to substantially increase its information about the actual behavior of its street-level employees it cannot know:
>
> 1. How much of its time and resources it will have to invest to unearth useful information;
> 2. How much resistance and disruption will be encountered;
> 3. Whether what will be found will have been worth the effort and;
> 4. Very importantly, whether it will be able to alter undesirable behavior once it is discovered. Under these circumstances not only are comparisons difficult, but there are strong disincentives for attempting to increase the agency's ability to make them".
>
> (Prottas, 1978: 309)

When applied to the horse-world these points raise a question about whether the BHIC and Defra considered such issues given the Henley Centre Report's (2004: 56) recommendations to address fragmentation and lack of cooperation within and between equine organisations.

We can see support for Lipsky's (1980) assertion that numerous factors determine bureaucratic discretion for example, the task at hand, context, workload pressures, culture, rules, constraints and the external environment (Scott, 1997: 37). More importantly, street-level bureaucrats can place "clients into bureaucratically defined categories". In the context of equestrianism this could include determining if an equestrian is an affiliated or unaffiliated member, influencing the level of assistance and service provided. Scott (1997: 37) argued that discretion and power leaves the organisational system open to manipulation; how information is interpreted and recorded within systems, which limits "the agency's ability to influence their own [street-level bureaucrat's] behaviour" (e.g. BHS influencing the BHS regional representative).

The implications of street-level bureaucracy for implementing the Horse Strategy are clear, successful policy implementation at local-level is contingent upon interactions and discretionary decisions made by street-level bureaucrats (regional representatives (equine organisations)) towards citizens/clients (grassroots equestrians). Scott (1997: 35) found "individual decision-maker attributes" were least likely to influence discretion. More significant was "professional field" and most significant was "the level of organizational control and client characteristics". In assessing "client need" the above factors contributed "to differential judgements and treatment of clients" consistent with Lipsky's (1980) characterisation of street-level bureaucrats (Scott, 1997: 35). This evidence suggests that BHIC and Defra are reliant upon street-level bureaucrats - regional representatives (equine organisations) or "service providers" to implement the Horse Strategy:

> "[P]ublic policies are shaped by service providers as they determine how existing policies and regulations are to be implemented, or even circumvented, in their day-to-day interaction with clients. This presents serious implications for democracy when the de facto information of public policy becomes captive to the personal inclinations of the individual service provider...determine the texture of the relationship between citizens and government"
>
> (Scott, 1997: 53)

An organisational feature that is overlooked by street-level bureaucracy is the concept and role of trust within organisational structures (Dietz, 2011 , Dietz and Gillespie, 2011). The Henley Centre Report (2004) highlighted issues of distrust throughout the horse-world and that must, I argue, be considered in studying policy implementation. As Lane (1987: 543) found in her examination of studies adopting "bottom-up" policy models, emphasis shifts from allocating distinct responsibility roles to developing "the trust side" of the policy process increasing the likelihood of successful implementation. This suggests that without equestrians trusting the equine organisations or local authority officers to represent their interests, co-operation and effective policy implementation are less likely (Dietz, 2011 , Lane, 1987 , Rothstein, 1998: 100, Swift, 2001: 16).

This section has introduced Lipsky's notion of the street-level bureaucrat as part of analysing the complex wicked policy problem facing the BHIC and Defra. This shifts "normative concern away from questions about how those at the top can exert their wills that above all characterizes the "bottom-up" kind of approach to implementation" (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 53). As Hill and Hupe (2009: 44) remind us, effective implementation is "a wider problem about how to identify the features of a very complex process, occurring across time and space, and involving multiple actors".

In the following and final substantive section of this chapter, I explore the use of the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) developed as a "diagnostic tool" to assess such issues from a bottom-up approach. Specifically, what stakeholders

require to engage and what measures can overcome barriers to engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a).

3.6 The CLEAR Framework: a diagnostic tool for engagement

The CLEAR framework was designed to look "at policy initiatives from the perspective and position of citizens" (bottom-up) to gain insights into "what citizens think about their engagement initiative and how they might be developed or improved" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 285). In the context of implementing the Horse Strategy, the CLEAR framework will contribute towards understanding the successful implementation of the Strategy by analysing engagement at local-level.

In the UK, policy research has focused on "official attempts to engage citizens in decision making" and how to encourage engagement (IPPR. and Social Regeneration Consultants., 2010 , Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 281). The literature refers to policy "participation" throughout. However, to avoid confusion with "sports participation", I use "engagement" to differentiate between the two policy challenges of i) increasing participation in equestrianism and ii) engaging grassroots stakeholders with the aims of the Strategy and the necessary communication to achieve the envisaged transformation to a Horse Industry. The CLEAR Framework is an "investigative" tool developed in order to assess "official schemes to encourage participation" with policy at local-level and suggest remedial measures (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 281). Lowndes *et* al., led a series of studies from 1998 to 2006 to create the CLEAR Framework; i) two studies looked at local-level policy engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 1998a, 1998b), ii) in 2001, the series continued in examining the "trends" in engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a, 2001b), iii) finally, in 2006, a study investigated the "use of rules" and interpretation variations at local-level (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b) and from these studies, the CLEAR Framework emerged (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a, 2006c). Here, I summarise the key findings of the studies from 2001 onwards.

Engagement with policy lay at the "heart of the Labour government's modernization agenda for British local government" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a). Attempting to increase local-level engagement with policy, Labour's reform was a "fundamental" shift "towards altering cultures and attitudes within local government as it is towards creating new opportunities for democratic participation" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 205). Their findings on engagement trends were reported in two articles – first, surveying local government (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a) and second, conducting focus groups with citizens (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b).

Engagement was defined as "public involvement in the processes of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies", excluding electoral practices (Parry *et al.*, 1992: 16, cited in Lowndes et al, 2001a: 206). The aim was to examine policy engagement beyond traditional elections and party membership. To do this, "forms of participation" (engagement) were created;[12] i) consumerist engagement (service delivery); ii) traditional engagement (long history of engagement with local policy); iii) forum engagement (service users to discuss current issues); iv) consultative innovation engagement (support for testing new policy proposals) and v) deliberative innovation engagement (reflection by citizens on previous policy, its effects, and how it could be improved) (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 207).

From a local government perspective, Lowndes *et al.,* (2001a: 214) found that consumerist methods were primarily used to encourage engagement. For example, appealing to citizens to engage in health, volunteering and neighbourhood campaigns. The survey showed "commitment and enthusiasm across local government for innovation" to encourage engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 214). The authors argued that proactive behaviour is not a response to policy, rather "it demonstrates a sense of ownership within individual

[12] Local government survey to local government officials (Chief Executives) *n*=332, response rate 85%. Case studies across 11 local authorities.

authorities of the democratic possibilities which such initiatives hold and a willingness to develop them" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 214). The evidence suggests support for "street-level bureaucrat" behaviour in a reported proactive shift towards increasing engagement with policy at local-level (Lipsky, 1980). The 2001 survey "provided an important benchmark against which to measure democratic development in future years" for the local officials (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 215). It also highlighted local-level constraints for increasing engagement, such as budgetary constraints that meant local authorities were in the position of "doing more, with less" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 215).

A caveat to increasing engagement, similar to that observed by Downward (2007) in the context of increasing access to sports facilities, is that in increasing access to policy, it does not necessarily lead to "democratic enhancement" or actual engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 215). Some local officials reported resistance to encouraging policy engagement "there is a perception that there is little public enthusiasm for enhanced participation … Such a perception makes justifying participation initiatives even harder" for proactive officials (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 215). Here, we can see a further potential for street-level bureaucrat's to influence citizens engagement at local-level (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 215).

In contrast, the second article looked at the citizens perspectives on what factors influenced engagement and explored the reported "apathy (and social exclusion)" towards local-level engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b: 446). Based on focus group discussions[13] "a range of interacting motivations for participation," was revealed, suggesting that a range of factors influenced the decision to engage and there were "current deterrents to participation in local government" strategies (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b: 454). The focus groups reported key factors that would enhance engagement; i) reiterative consultation, ii) input

[13] Participants were sought from a range of groups including ethnic and disadvantaged across the same 11 local authorities as the first study.

into decisions, iii) shared responsibility for implementation by appointing local leaders iv) invite recruits, v) open exchange of ideas, and vi) importantly, keeping all parties informed of progress (adapted from Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b: 454). The citizens also produced an engagement "checklist" for local authorities; (a) "Has anything happened?" (b) "Has it been worth the money?" and (c) "Have they carried on talking to the public?" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b: 454). I argue that these focus groups represented a "conscious complex system" (Geyer and Rihani, 2010) which included multiple actors, behaviours and perceptions that influenced an individual's choice to participate (or engage). The evidence from the focus groups suggested the adoption of a collaborative approach, placing stakeholder engagement at the centre of managing complex wicked policy problems (Conklin, 2006 , Geyer and Rihani, 2010 , Roberts, 2009).

In a subsequent study, Lowndes *et* al., (2006b: 539) examined "rules-in-use" surrounding engagement initiatives and argued that rules are "locally distinctive" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 539). The authors investigated "the complex interaction of three sets of factors in shaping local political participation: socio-economic status, social capital and institutional design" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 539). Institutional design was "most open to manipulation" while socio-economic status and social capital were deemed "hard to change" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 539). The authors argued that actors shape their environment and create differences between localities through "rules-in-use" which impact on "people's motivation" to engage (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 539). This study, based on a survey sent to 100 local authorities in the UK created a database based on the three factor criteria (socio-economic status, social capital and institutional design). From this dataset "eight contrasting English localities," were selected in terms of "high", "medium", and "low" democratic innovation scores as case studies. A series of interviews were conducted in each area with a random sample of participants with two focus groups drawn from "community activists" (public) and "frontline" local authority officers" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 544).

The findings led the authors to argue that although "public authorities can make a big difference to participation by giving people the incentives to mobilize" and engage with policy at local-level (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 559), "large-scale national survey investigations of participation" fail to "capture the impact of rules-in-use" and provide only partial insight into what influences engagement at local-level (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 559). Local authorities were recommended to adopt a collaborative approach with the public "in order to understand the experience of participation in different localities" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 559). In relation to institutional design, the authors found evidence of actors influencing policy outcomes:

> "There is a degree of path dependence but actors can shape and bend institutional forces in new directions … internal efficacy refers to the individual's perceptions that they can make a difference to political outcomes"
>
> (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 559)

This evidence suggests "street-level bureaucracy" involves the concept of internal efficacy where discretion can impact on outcomes within local authorities (Lipsky, 1980). It also suggests that "structural interests" (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , North, 1995) are played out at local-level through "institutional actors"; i) political parties [professional monopolisers], because they run much of what happens in local politics and government, ii) local government managers [corporate rationalisers], because they are responsible for the delivery of a vast range of local services and, iii) civic leaders [community population], because they provide channels for communication and coordination among community organizations (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006b: 560).

Based on this series of studies Lowndes *et al.,* (2006a) created the CLEAR Framework - a "diagnostic tool … rather than a judgemental approach" to enable "policy makers and practitioners to understand the factors that support and, more importantly, hold back participation with their communities" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 281). This bottom-up approach puts local-level actors at the centre of

analysis to understand how to amend implementation practices which encourage engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 26). Note the phase *agent at the centre of analysis,* this is consistent with complexity theory where human social agency directly impacts upon the levels of engagement within a conscious complex system (Byrne, 2005 , Geyer and Rihani, 2010).

The CLEAR Framework not only assists in the identification of opportunities and barriers to engagement with the Horse Strategy, but prompts links to the research question 'To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of, and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?' If engagement is low, the CLEAR Framework suggests remedial measures to engage citizens, based on the concept of enhancing social capital (Putnam, 1993, 2000). The authors argue that engagement is most effective where citizens (grassroots equestrians):

C • **Can do** – have the resources and knowledge to participate
L • **Like to** – have a sense of attachment that reinforces engagement
E • are **Enabled to** – are provided with the opportunity for engagement
A • are **Asked to** – are mobilised by official bodies or voluntary groups
R • are **Responded to** – see evidence that their views have been considered.

(Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 286)

Below I describe how these processes and key factors of the CLEAR Framework tool relate to the empirical study of the implementation of the Horse Strategy that follows (adapted from Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 26-30):

"Can do" refers to awareness and knowledge of the Horse Strategy and whether grassroots equestrians have the appropriate skills to access resources to implement the Strategy's aims (socio-economic factors). The CLEAR Framework can assist in the identification of potential barriers for engagement linked to grassroots socio-economic factors.

"Like to" refers to the importance of people's sense of community as a basis for engagement. For grassroots equestrians this would involve addressing the acknowledged levels of cultural distrust towards equine organisations and BHIC

and Defra (HCR, 2004: 56-7). The CLEAR Framework has the potential to diagnose and understand the factors that encourage citizen engagement with the Horse Strategy.

"Enabled to" places emphasis on creating and maintaining partnerships, networks, and groups, to support engagement and provide a communication network to BHIC and Defra. This aspect of the CLEAR Framework links directly to Aim One of the Horse Strategy - *Bringing the Industry Together* (BHIC, 2005), which the Henley Centre Report (2004) cited as essential for successful implementation.

"Asked to" by *asking* people to engage rather than waiting for volunteers improves the likelihood of successful policy implementation. This method was adopted within Henley Centre Report stakeholder consultation workshops, a range of equestrians were asked to participate and provided insights into the horse-world based on their experience (HCR, 2004: 56-7). However, the BHIC and Defra seek to engage *all* equestrians (including grassroots) with the Horse Strategy. The CLEAR Framework recommends that "public bodies need a broad repertoire of approaches to reach different citizen groups … [by] seeking to build a capacity for reflexivity and learning" to encourage engagement with policy at local-level (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 453).

"Responded to" involves making grassroots equestrians feeling valued and listened to by equine organisations and BHIC and Defra. Lowndes *et al* (2001a: 452-3) highlighted that deterrents to participation is "citizens perception – or previous experience – of a lack of response" during the policy process. The CLEAR Framework is designed to assess reciprocity, a question of relevance for this study of the Horse Strategy. The BEF has been perceived by grassroots equestrians as catering for professional riders only and this reported bias has

contributed to grassroots equestrians resisting joining an equine organisation (HCR, 2004: 4).

Lowndes *et al.,* (2006c: 31) accepted that the CLEAR Framework cannot provide engagement "nirvana" (100% engagement), but argue that it can be used as a tool to instigate institutions and the actors within them to adapt and change to social environments during policy implementation. To this end, the CLEAR Framework is designed to address complex wicked policy problems in that it "is not a one-off examination of the strengths and weaknesses of participation in a locality ... [it is] continuously revisit[ed]" to "refresh the mechanisms that facilitate, or inhibit, participation" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 31). The following statement is one I will return to periodically throughout the research:

> "At the heart of our argument is a challenge to all policymakers to apply and reapply the CLEAR model. We must ensure that participation opportunities continue to evolve as local contexts change and communities themselves develop over time"
>
> (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 31)

To test this argument, Lowndes *et al.,* (2006c: 1) recognised that "not everyone is convinced that government should be investing its valuable resources in pursuit of greater citizen participation". This was based on their previous studies where policy engagement at local-level was linked to the "social and economic status of individuals or strength of community ties (social capital)" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 1). Engagement was suggested to be an option for the privileged in society. The authors argued that engagement is more complex "while poverty and inequality, and community strength, shape levels of participation, they do not determine them" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 1). They also examined how "political, managerial and civic players behave in the context of these structures" (institutions) to diagnose the influence of these actors on "the likelihood that citizens will participate" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 2). The CLEAR Framework was used across six contrasting local authorities to "judge whether they were getting their

participation strategy right … [and] show how local politicians and officials can get people to participate, if they are prepared to change the way they behave" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 2). The authors argued a "vital factor" to explore was "the degree to which those with power encourage and support participation" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 3). The six "contrasting local authority areas" were categorised as low, middle, or high socio-economic locales (2 in each category) and used to measure variation in rates of engagement with policy and election turnout - defined as "political activity and efficacy, that is, the influence of rules" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 10).

The findings of this study revealed that the two low socio-economic areas had a role to play in explaining engagement, "[b]ut puzzles remain" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 16). Variations emerged between the two areas, one had high ratings of social capital and engagement for reasons they could not fully explain, the other did not (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 16). For the middle category socio-economic status and social capital factors were found to be similar with the key factor influencing engagement was the operation of the institutions; one area operated with "openness" and provided "incentives" to engage, while the other was indifferent "to the challenge of participation" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 22). The authors argued that the behaviour of the key players influenced engagement. The first authority, an "open" institution had a "political and administrative culture [that] encourages engagement" reflected in managerial strategies (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 22), while the second authority employed "old fashioned, inward-looking politicians and officers, who do little to encourage engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 22). For high socio-economic areas, both had "active levels of participation", however, engagement differed between the areas, (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 23). One created a supportive culture for engagement but was compounded by logistics across urban and rural areas, which limited "the focus of district-level political activity" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 23). By comparison, the other area provided "little evidence of political commitment to

consultation, or any official commitment to new public management ideas" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 24). The authors suggested engagement was contingent upon a well supported "vibrant civic infrastructure" based on "volunteering and campaigning on particular issues" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 24). Although engagement rates were high in both areas, Lowndes *et* al., (2006c: 24) argued that if "more effective institutional practices" were pursued this could potentially increase higher engagement. In conclusion, the authors provided insight into the key factors encouraging engagement at local-level:

> "[n]ot only the existence of positive institutional rules … but also the synergy between them…. are several positive signs of change, occurring not only in the internal management of that authority but also in its wider relationships with its community and the institutional rules that frame political engagement. In this respect, our case studies are illustrative of the way in which institutional rules frame opportunities for engagement"
>
> (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 24)

The evidence from these studies shows that we are dealing with interactions between "institutions", "rules", "players" and "citizens" which combine in unpredictable ways to influence engagement (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c). The findings are consistent with complexity arguments that we do not know everything and nothing is certain (Byrne and Callaghan, in press, 2013). In the context of Lowndes *et al's.,* studies it can be argued that they found evidence of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980) behaviour influencing engagement; "in the way in which their political, managerial and civic players operate – and interact – that makes the difference" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006c: 19). Therefore, the concepts of complex wicked policy problems (Byrne, 1998 , Rittel and Webber, 1973), structural interests (Alford, 1975), and street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980) operating within a conscious complex system (Geyer and Rihani, 2010) will complement the use of the CLEAR Framework to analyse the implementation of the Horse Strategy.

More specifically, the CLEAR Framework will help identify and assess the levels of engagement with the Horse Strategy at local-level, and combined with the Framework for Sports (Sport England., 2004b) to identify determinant factors influencing grassroots equestrian's reasons for participating in equestrianism, frame and answer the following research questions:

1. What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?
2. What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?
3. To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?
4. How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter combined with chapter two has shown how the implementation of the Horse Strategy creates two policy challenges for the BHIC and Defra i) increasing participation (chapter two) and ii) engaging equestrian stakeholder with the Horse Strategy and creating the necessary communication networks to create the envisaged Horse Industry (chapter three). In addition, it has described how implementation will be analysed using theories and concepts that inform the research questions above. First, the horse-world is conceptualised as a "conscious complex system" (Geyer and Rihani, 2010) which creates a complex wicked policy problem for the BHIC and Defra. Second, concepts of structural vested interests (Alford, 1975), and how this is played out by street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980) are argued to explain what happens during the policy implementation process which involves many actors who behave in unpredictable ways (regional representatives (equestrian organisations), local authority policy officers and grassroots equestrians). Finally, as a tool the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) will be used to understand what encourages grassroots equestrians to engage with the Horse Strategy and if engagement is low, suggest methods of increasing engagement with the Horse Strategy. The CLEAR Framework, complements the use of the Framework for Sport (Sport

England., 2004b) to address the two policy challenges of increasing participation in equestrianism and increasing engagement with the Strategy.

I now move on to discuss the methodological challenges in operationalising the research questions, the research design, methods and ethical considerations of the empirical study.

4. Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a detailed account of the research process. I start by discussing epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning the study. I outline the research design and process, discussing the choice of specific methods employed in sampling, data generation, collection, management and analysis in order to address the research questions that focus on: i) the motivation of individuals to participate in equestrianism, ii) understanding the barriers to participation, iii) establishing awareness of, and engagement with, the Horse Strategy and iv) identifying ways in which engagement with the strategy might be increased. I offer a critical analysis of the use of mixed methods and multi-site ethnography and consider my own role as researcher in this field of study (Davies, 2008: 4) before addressing the ethical considerations in preparing for and conducting the study.

4.2 Epistemological and Ontological considerations

As discussed in chapters two and three I have conceptualised the horse-world as a conscious complex system and the implementation of the horse strategy as a 'complex wicked policy problem' based on epistemological and ontological positions of "complexity" (Byrne, 1998). Complexity theory adopts "critical realism as a philosophical ontology with chaos/complexity as a scientific ontology" (Byrne, 1998: 8). The purpose here is to bridge the gap between the worlds of natural and human sciences rather than keeping them separate in order to understand "reality". As Byrne (2005: 5) reminds us, science seeks to impose "order on a world that is not really like that" and complexity theory accepts and adopts the critical realist philosophy of looking at reality from a different viewpoint. Therefore, the physical and social worlds are explored together because they include orderly (predictable, deterministic – life and death), complex (partial order, emergence and interpretation), and disorderly (unpredictable, irreducible and indeterminate) phenomena and systems (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 31-34).

Bhaskar (1989: 2) argued that beneath observed social phenomena and systems are "enduring structures and generative mechanisms" which exist irrespective of people's interpretation of them. And, although these mechanisms may not be directly observable, their effects are, which allows science access to study 'reality'. A critical realist/complexity position suggests a third way in understanding how 'reality' can be identified, as explained by Bhaskar (1989:2):

> "We will only be able to understand- and so change-the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events and discourses ...These structures are not spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events; they can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences"

Ontologically, this means that the structures and mechanisms of the horse-world (a conscious complex system) can exist in several states of 'reality' at any given point in time, depending on how actors perceive, interpret and experience their version of reality (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 68). For example, the Horse Strategy has a defined structure and implementation period (2005-2015), yet it only becomes 'real' in so far as grassroots equestrians are aware of its existence and incorporate practices in their equestrian lives which support implementation. This makes the challenge of implementing the Horse Strategy problematic because:

> "[w]hat is considered a problem, and in what way is it a problem, depends heavily on who is making the distinction. The same person might view the "problem" differently over time. And crucially, the "problem" might change during the process of "solution"
>
> (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 68)

As more actors enter the policy implementation process, so the degree of social complexity increases (Conklin, 2006). The implication is that in order to adequately reflect 'reality' for grassroots equestrians over time, a range of appropriate research methods is required to allow the researcher to make inferences between the oscillating orderly, complex and disorderly empirical phenomena and behaviours (Sayer, 2000: 12).

In exploring the complex properties of the conscious complex system and how it self-organises, I draw on critical realism and complexity theory to illuminate i) the historical and cultural features of the horse-world, its structures and mechanisms which exist irrespective of equestrians awareness of their existence or effects; and ii) events that occur within these structures or mechanisms that help equestrians to construct and make sense of the horse-world. As Byrne has argued:

> "We must understand hierarchical data as reflecting the character of the social world...we must have measures of individuals, of households, of neighbourhoods, of localities and so on, and we must recognise that we need to be able to relate all these levels to each other"
>
> (Byrne, 1998: 10)

In the context of the horse-world, it is critical to be able to relate the experiences of equestrians throughout the hierarchical levels, from leaders to the grassroots in relation to the implementation of the Horse Strategy, since it is through these experiences that equestrians attach meanings to the structures of the horse-world, their 'reality' (Sayer, 2000: 14). While Sayer (2000: 12) argues the importance of observing "events relating to the actual or the real" he guards against assuming that the observable provides researchers with the fundamental ability to be "confident about what we think exists" since epistemologically, the observable effects of structures and mechanisms form only part of what constitutes reality for individuals. More importantly, it is the meanings they attach to their reality which allows the researcher to "generate expectations about the world and about results of our actions which are realized" (Sayer, 1992: 68-69).

In the following section, I set out the research design constructed to access and capture the 'realities' experienced by different actors in the horse-world.

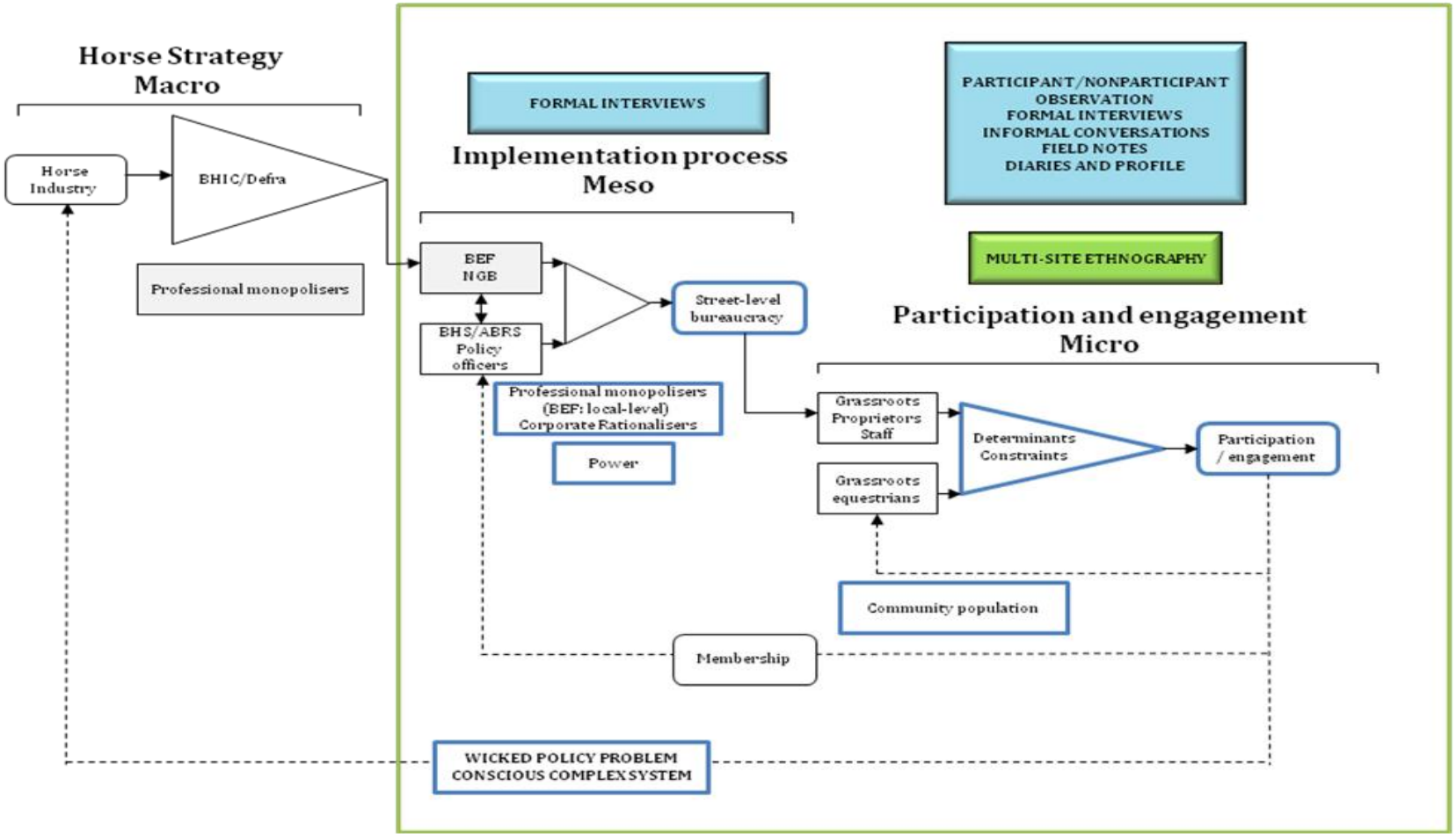
4.3 Research Design

Informed by the aims of the study, I adopted a mixed methods research design including documentary analysis, and the use of a number of data collection techniques within a multi-site ethnography based on four riding centres to allow me to explore the motivation of equestrians and barriers to participation in equestrianism, and to understand levels of awareness of, and engagement with, the Horse Strategy. I needed to access individual riders, horse owners and proprietors of riding centres as well as representatives of organisations with responsibility for promoting and regulating equestrian practices. These included equine organisations (BEF, BHS, and ABRS) and local authorities that held the responsibilities relating to leisure provision and access to rights of way. Figure 4.1 below, displays the research design for this study.

4.3.1 Multi-site ethnography

Multi-site ethnography provides the opportunity to "use multiple sources of information from multiple approaches to gain new insights into the social world" (Axinn and Pearce, 2006: 1). This includes the use of non-participant and participant observation, field notes, informal conversations, formal interviews, and documentary analysis (Hannerz, 2003). While the field of ethnography is widely debated, this approach to research is associated with gaining "first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting" usually achieved by using the principle method of "participant observation" and researcher immersion into the setting or culture of interest (Atkinson *et al.*, 2001: 4-5, Hammersley and Atkinson, 2006). I used participant observation and interviews to capture empirical knowledge of the horse-world, recording observations of symbols, acts, behaviour and situational experience, and took extensive field notes to record my own reflections throughout (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 128-129).

Figure 4.1: Research design for analysing the implementation of the Horse Strategy (adapted from Lord and Brown, 2004: 34)



The use of multi-site ethnography, important to capture a sufficiently diverse range of equestrian experiences to address the research questions, represented a break from the more traditional application of ethnography that imply full immersion of the researcher in the field over a significant period of time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2006: 3), yet still allowed me to develop sufficient closeness and familiarity with the research settings and participants.

The potential weaknesses of using a multi-site and multi-method approach, i.e. the danger of 'spreading myself too thinly' and sacrificing **depth** of understanding, were balanced by the advantages of generating a range of data of similar types in different locales. A common criticism of participant observation is that researchers run the risk of subjective bias in interpreting what they see and subsequently record (Davies, 2008: 82, Morse and Richards, 2002: 96). Interviews can also be subject to "problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation" (Yin, 2003: 93). But by using a multi-site and mixed method strategy, I was able to triangulate data from different sources and using different methods, while also reflecting on the impact of my pre-existing knowledge and experience of equestrianism on the data generation process.

4.3.2 Sampling strategy

Working within the resource constraints of the study, the empirical data collection focused on the North East of England. With no readily available sampling frames to access individual horse riders and owners I constructed frames by drawing on: i) lists of approved centres on the BHS and ABRS websites and ii) advertisements in local newspapers, telephone directories, equestrian magazines and the internet. These latter sources gave me access to 'non-approved' (by the BHS/ABRS) but licensed (by local authorities) operators and enabled me to distinguish between 'family run' centres and 'business-oriented' centres. Using this strategy I constructed sampling frames of twelve BHS/ABRS

registered and approved riding centres/livery yards, two non-approved riding centres and two racing yards[14]

Of the twelve approved riding establishments, ten were riding centres (including one community college riding centre) and two were livery yards. My aim was to select the sample that would offer the best chance of capturing the greatest diversity in order to be able to address the research questions. To keep the study manageable, while also offering sufficient diversity to demonstrate the degree of unique "interactivity" between the riding centre "situations" and the Horse Strategy (Stake, 2006: 22-23), my aim was to identify four centres as sites where I could use ethnographic methods to best understand motivation to participate in equestrianism and awareness of and engagement with the Horse Strategy.

The sampling method can best be described as purposive (Bryman, 2004) but this oversimplifies the process of selection that was informed by a sustainability criterion (not threatened with closure, relocation or change of use). I briefed the proprietor of each centre about the aims of the study either by phone or during a personal visit. With no intention of collecting data at that point I found myself inundated with interest in the study, prompted in large part by publicity surrounding a recent court ruling (the 2003 Mirvahedy vs. Henley court case)[15] that led to the introduction of compulsory liability insurance for riding centres, raising overheads to a point that threatened business viability for some proprietors. All twelve centres expressed a wish to participate and the information gleaned during these introductory exchanges helped to develop a contextual understanding of each of the selected centres. The four selected establishments represent those that were least threatened and therefore offered

[14] A decision was made to exclude the racing yards from the potential sample because the racing sector already constitutes part of the 'Horse Industry'.
[15] This case found the owners of an escaped horse liable for injuries sustained by the plaintive even though they had not been negligent under Section 2 of the 1971 Animals Act. The debate continues (see www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses/topics/insurance.htm).

the strongest possibility of yielding sufficient empirical data for the study. Table 4.1 shows the four centres, three approved and one non-approved.

Table 4.1: **Sample of grassroots riding centres**

Riding Centre	Approval	Structure	Locality	Options
Equus	BHS/ABRS	Business/ Charity	Urban	No livery
Hengst	BHS	Family run	Rural/sub-urban	Livery
Fohlen	BHS	Business	Rural	Livery
Cavallo	Non-BHS	Business	Rural	Livery

The Centres were located in two local authority areas allowing straightforward identification of policy officers dealing with Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP). Identifying regional representatives of equine organisations (BHS, BEF, WHW) was also straightforward with each organisation having a single representative responsible for the area. [16]

The four sites, that have been given pseudonyms, are described in the following boxes in order to provide the reader with an understanding of their key features and the contrasts between them.

[16] the ABRS operated only on a national basis.

Box 4.1 Site 1: Equus

This BHS/ABRS approved riding centre, established in 1992, was selected for the following unique features:

- it is an *urban-based* riding centre;
- it operates as a registered charity;
- it strives to combine the ethos of a charity while developing the commercial arm of operations into a centre of riding excellence.

The centre is located close to a historic quay, where horses were employed to transport manufacturing goods along the river area, and latterly part of this riding centre's premises functioned as a slaughter house. In 1992, a purpose built facility was constructed approximately five hundred metres from the existing premises. This increased the stabling capacity from fifteen to twenty-six horses. The new facility included conference facilities, parking provision, a café and modern indoor riding arena (40m x 20m). The centre seeks to bring the rural into the urban domain providing the opportunity for socially disadvantaged and disabled young people (under eighteen) to engage in equestrian activities.

This centre is part funded through charitable means – council grants, charitable trusts, public donations, etc. The centre's commercial aspect offers lessons to riders of all capabilities. Therefore, the centre is in partnership with social care and disability services, councils, secondary schools and community groups within the local vicinity offering subsidised riding lessons. The ethos of the centre is to meet personal, social and educational needs for local young people and views the horse's role as a medium to motivate, educate and develop key social skills (Blake, 1977 , McCormick and McCormick, 1997). The centre employs a total of sixteen full-time staff split between operational duties of management (5) and yard duties (11) supported by a plethora of volunteers (children and adults).

The unique operational status and locale offers the opportunity to explore the contrasting social, economic and environmental barriers faced by this centre against the more traditional riding centre. For instance, how do they encourage participation and relate to the horse-world in general? To what extent does charitable status impact on profit margins, staff wages and lesson prices? Does the urban location impact on the potential for business growth - in terms of future expansion? Do they exchange best practice with rural-based riding centres?

Box 4.2, Site 2: "Hengst"

Hengst initially developed in a rural area over a period of twenty-five years, but developments in housing and transportation links (road and rail) have made this centre sub-urban. The family-run BHS approved centre is self-contained and set within one hundred acres of land with:

- Three large grazing fields (incorporating a cross-country course);
- Stabling to accommodate up to ninety horses (60 livery and 30 school horses);
- On-site hotel and restaurant - offering riding holidays;
- Large indoor riding arena (60m x 30m)/Outdoor sand based arena (40m x 30m);
- Café/Tack shop – delivering equine equipment and feed to local equestrians;
- BHS instructor training;
- Equestrian demonstrations/clinics conducted by equestrian experts.

Hengst is a commercially-oriented yard, including horse trading activities (buying and selling) and livery provision, while providing riding lessons catering for children through to experienced adults. Alongside trading activities, Hengst supports a large livery base, which is the main source of income for the equine aspect of the business. Hengst contrasts starkly in ethos and commercial business approach to Equus (although some economic and environmental factors apply equally to both centres - overheads for horse care, encouraging participation, maintaining access for hacking purposes and expansion constraints). The additional feature of an on-site hotel offering riding holidays provides a source of comparison between this centre and Site 3 (Fohlen); a well-established rural riding centre which also offers riding holidays. Hengst employs a total of twelve staff; two family members, one yard manager, eight freelance instructors and one yard/maintenance assistant.

Box 4.3, Site 3: "Fohlen"

Fohlen was selected as a contrast to Hengst. Although an approved BHS centre for over thirty years, Fohlen differs from Hengst in the following respects. It: :

- is rurally situated within 220 acres of farmland and countryside;
- accommodates up to fifty horses (20 livery and 25 school horses at present);
- has established links with British Eventing - boasting three British Eventing approved cross country courses running regular affiliated competitions;
- endorses self-sufficient organic farming practices producing its own hay and haylage (moistened hay to reduce allergens) and bedding materials on site;
- offers BHS instructor training and Riding and Road Safety exams;
- hosts University equestrian team training;
- two riding arenas; indoor (42m x 20m) and "all-weather" outdoor (64m x 24m).

The organic theme extends to the liveries choosing to stable their horses at Fohlen. The ethos of this centre is to provide a holistic horse experience throughout tuition, hacking and livery amenities to make looking after horses a self-sufficient task. Recycling of all waste from the horse and associated activities is encouraged where possible. The hedge rows are conserved to protect the natural environment and encourage wildlife habitats. Staff provide comprehensive instruction on all aspects of horse care and stable management from owning your first horse and feeding regimes through to bespoke fitness (horse) programmes for individual, competitive or group requirements. The proprietors adopt a "hands-off" management style regarding the day-to-day running of the centre, choosing to deal with only financial and horse welfare management matters. Fohlen employs a well-established team - the Head Instructor has worked there for over seventeen years. The rest of the team consists of a receptionist/instructor (dealing with bookings), four full-time members of staff; one yard manager, three junior instructors who also undertake yard duties, two freelance instructors and two farm staff to maintain the organic aspect of the centre. In addition, there was a small number of volunteers although this practice is not encouraged at Fohlen.

Box 4.4, Site 4: "Cavallo"

The final, and non-approved, site differs in terms of operational and business procedures from sites 1-3.

- The rural-based premises are leased, not owned by the proprietor (who lives close by, off-site);
- It is not an approved BHS centre, rather licensed to trade via an annual veterinary inspection for the local council;
- It is well established and to accommodate demand, changed location seven years ago to the current larger site with twenty-two acres of grazing (incorporating a cross country course), stabling for fifty horses (operates at full capacity), a large outdoor arena (60m x 30m) and a small indoor arena (30m x 25m).
- The proprietor has over fifty years' experience within the horse-world and possesses a strong affiliation with the local hunt. The hunt converted to trail hunting following government legislation in 2005.

The proprietor is in semi-retirement, leaving the majority of yard management to the Head Girl (employed for 15 years). The centre employs three further full-time members of staff, a BHS qualified instructor, an instructor/maintenance staff and a junior instructor with two freelance instructors for specific peak periods (weekends and holiday periods). With the large horse to staff ratio, there is a heavy reliance on livery assistance and mainly junior volunteers during evenings and weekends. The centre caters for a diverse range of tuition from age four upwards to the large contingent of adult riders (mainly liveries). The proprietor's hunting links provide the opportunity to hire horses to hunt, and for local equestrians to bring their own horse or pony to receive hunt tuition.

This overview of the four sites, each of which operates within the generic remit of a riding centre providing tuition and horse management skills, demonstrates variation across a range of characteristics that is designed to offer the potential to capture the experiences of a wide range of equestrians.

4.3.3 Identification of individual equestrians

The identification of individual equestrians across the four sites was informed by the search for individuals who could provide diverse examples of participation within equestrianism, across the "spectrum of engagement" (HCR,

2004: 10). For example, I purposively selected individual riders with different levels of experience from novice to intermediate and advanced (where possible). Similarly I sought to capture the experiences of male equestrians within what is widely understood to be a female dominated environment (BETA, 2011). Table 4.2 shows the final sample of representatives of equine organisations, local authority policy officers and individual equestrians who contributed to the generation of data through interviews, diaries and profiles, methods that are discussed later in the chapter.

Table 4.2: Research sample and methods

Institution	**Interviewees (*n*=43)**	**Formal Interviews (*n*=59)**	**Diaries**	**Profiles**
BHS	Regional Representative	2	-	-
BEF	Regional Representative	2	-	-
WHW	Regional Representative	1	-	-
BHS	Regional Chairperson	2	-	-
ABRS	Inspector	1	-	-
Local Authority	Policy Officer	2	-	-
	Policy Officer	2	-	-
Equus	Proprietor	3	-	-
	Staff	5	-	-
	Riders/owners	5	12	2
Hengst	Proprietor	2	-	-
	Staff	4	-	-
	Riders/owners	4	12	4
Fohlen	Proprietor	2	-	-
	Staff	6	-	-
	Riders	3	20	2
Cavallo	Proprietor	3	-	-
	Staff	6	-	-
	Riders /owner	5	20	3

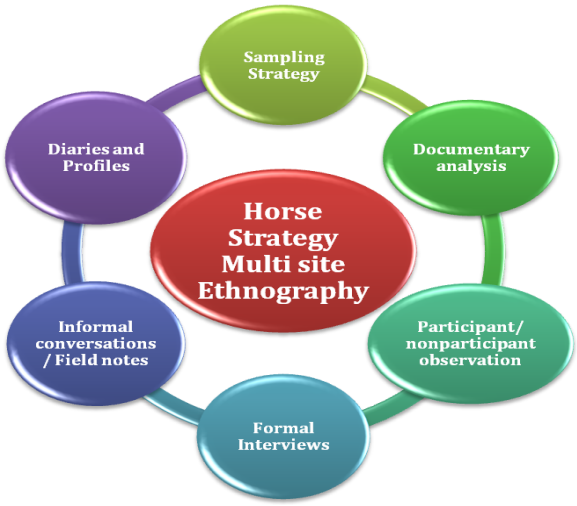
The research sample included the following demographics: age – 3-21(*n*=9), 22-35 (*n*=6), >35 (*n*=28); gender – males (8), females (35).

Some participants were recruited using "snowballing" techniques within each centre starting with proprietors and/or staff, while some equestrians asked to be included after a fellow equestrian had been interviewed at the same site (Bryman, 2004: 333-4). This allowed me to reach a position where I was confident of including a diverse range of equestrians from all levels of experience across all sites.

4.3.4 Methods of data collection

In this section, I describe the mixed methods used to collect data within and beyond each of the four sites. As shown in Figure 4.2 below I began by analysing relevant documentary sources before embarking on periods of participant and non-participant observation at each centre, semi structured interviews with individuals and an attempt to broaden understanding beyond those who were interviewed, through the use of diaries and the development of equestrian profiles. I made extensive field notes as a record of observations, informal conversations and my own thoughts and reflections as the field work progressed.

Figure 4.2: Mixed Methods Data Collection Strategy



4.3.4.1 Documentary analysis

In order to understand the rationale behind the magnitude of the proposed transformation of the horse-world into an industry, a significant amount of time was dedicated to reviewing industry related documentation. I started with the Henley Centre Report (HCR, 2004) and summary (Defra and BHIC, 2004) which informed the design of the Horse Strategy. Next, I turned my attention to reviewing national, regional and local information. At national level, the Henley Centre Report and summary formed one aspect of the changes proposed within the Horse Strategy itself. This resulted in several "spin-off" strategies addressing specific areas, such as concerns over importing horses that risk contamination through carrying exotic equine diseases (Defra, 2005), equine welfare guidance (BEVA., 2007 , NEWC, 2005) and the Farmer Diversification policy (Defra., 2007). Most important were the periodic National Equestrian Surveys, which provide one of the most comprehensive data sets on the horse-world (BETA, 1995, 1999, 2006, 2011). In addition, I subscribed to the BHIC, BEF (National Governing Body) and BHS newsletters, updates and forums. These subscriptions provided current information on developments related to the Horse Strategy, for instance, the "Hoof" project which is designed to encourage participation in equestrianism and build on the proposed equestrian legacy emerging from the London 2012 Olympics (see Hoof, 2010 , Hoof it., 2010).

The BEF and BHS have regional links routed through their national websites. This allowed access to region specific developments and documents, also through subscription. The websites showed that equestrianism information was available for national, regional, and local (macro, meso, and micro) levels. The emphasis of email updates and forum discussions centred on local issues for equestrians; access rights, local events, abandoned horses, etc. The regional websites included links to local authorities and facilitated access to literature relevant for the implementation of the Horse Strategy at local-level. In particular, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for the two local authority areas formed part of two prominent region specific equine strategies

(Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007 , Tyne and Wear Council Forum., 2005) and Tees Valley (McAuley and McGee, 2005).

I also subscribed to "Horse & Hound" magazine, the self-professed "bible of the equestrian world" containing weekly reports on a diverse range of equestrian topics from national, regional and local "news", to hunting and the horse racing season (Horse & Hound., 2007). As a member of the BHS, I already received their quarterly magazine. This publication also reported on relevant topics and included a specific section where regional representatives provide updates and reports. At a later stage, I acquired a hard copy of the Equine Business Guide (Bacon and Wilkinson, 2006) and the Equine Employers Handbook (British Grooms Association., 2010). The first focuses on improving the business acumen of proprietors, specifically on how to improve profit margins linked to pertinent topics of litigation, insurance, competition, regulation and employment factors (Bacon and Wilkinson, 2006: iii). The Handbook is the first official document that includes case studies, letter templates, legal facts and checklists specifically designed in a format that proprietors can follow, adapt and use (British Grooms Association., 2010).

While documentary analysis may elicit important data, methodologically there are factors which need to be considered. Hodder's (2003: 156) discussion of the implications commences by distinguishing between documents and records. He states that records are usually official text recorded within technology – bank statements, certificates and so forth. Whereas, documents are drawn on "personal rather than official reasons" – in this context policies (state documents), participant diaries, and field notes (Hodder, 2003: 156). More importantly, attention should be directed towards consciously recognising that in re-reading text it becomes interpreted within the current not historical context and therefore constructed outside the original meaning of the author or, as Hodder (2003: 158) puts it, "situating material culture within varying contexts while at the same time entering into a dialectic relationship between those

contexts and the context of the analyst," which results in a "hermeneutical" or investigative task. Therefore, a robust approach was adopted when I considered documentary sources, based on Scott's (1990) approach, to ensure:

- "Authenticity" (genuine and reliable source);
- "Credibility" (free from error and distortion);
- "Representativeness" (typical of its kind, if not is the degree of variation known?);
- "Meaning" (clear and comprehensible evidence).

(Scott, 1990 cited in Bryman (2004: 381))

4.3.4.2 Participant and nonparticipant observation

A significant feature of the multi-site ethnographic approach is participant and nonparticipant observation. Participant observation involved joining with and experiencing the daily activities of each riding centre first hand. Non participant observation implies watching how people behave and act in their environment and creating field notes accordingly (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002). Observing individuals in the field setting can act as a powerful tool for comparing and contrasting observational and interview data, highlighting behavioural inconsistencies (Hannerz, 2003: 210-12). More importantly, both participant and non-participant observation offer the means for understanding the different activities in which equestrians engage on a daily basis offering insights into the world of grassroots equestrianism. By becoming a participant observer I discovered by watching and listening and engaging with equestrians, how they viewed the horse-world. I was aware that consistent with traditional ethnographic methodology the researcher should strive to remain somewhat detached from the context in order to present a "dispassionate" account or "objective reality" of the chosen subject area (Bryman, 2004: 501-2). My own place in the research together with my passion for equestrianism, discussed at the outset of this thesis, however, made this very challenging.

As a starting point for observation and field notes, I recorded the physical details of each site: its location (urban – suburban – rural), entrance to the stables, car

parking facilities, layout of the premises, and the condition of the stables and horses. With the permission of proprietors I took photographs of each site but these were only used to provide points of reference for me during later stages of data analysis and writing.

A large part of the research was dedicated to participant observation, three months in each site. I split the twelve month period of 2008 into two six month periods. During the first six months I focussed on Equus and Hengst, attending each on alternative weeks. The second six months followed a similar pattern for Fohlen and Cavallo. The busiest periods were in the evenings and weekends, but I also spent some time at each site during the day time to watch particular groups, for example, disabled riders. On each visit, I would "hang out" with staff and equestrians, engaging in daily horse care duties of mucking out, tacking up, bringing horses to customers and on numerous occasions ride. This made the task of engaging in informal conversations straightforward and usually took place in the stables, café, offices or watching riding lessons. I was able to steer the conversation to ask about how individuals became interested in equestrian participation. I also enquired if participants knew of the Horse Strategy, and if they were members of equine organisations.

The ability to recall informal conversations was imperative and I carried a small pocket book and handheld recorder where I could momentarily scribble down points or record brief observations as I swept out a stable, returned to the tack room or my car. Field notes produced in this manner gradually built into eliciting the *explicit* - "what people are able to articulate about themselves" - and *tacit* aspects of equestrianism - the feeling of understanding without having to verbalise a meaning; seeking to gain an insight into the determinants influencing why people ride and participate in equestrianism (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002: 1). I bore in mind that in entering the field, my participation in riding centre activities and interpretation of "what is going on" created a "necessary connection to the research situation and hence …[impacted] upon it" (Davies,

2008: 7), for example, my knowledge of equestrianism and cultural milieu. When asked for an opinion on why a horse went lame, I watched the horse trot and was able to give an informed judgement.

This made the task of "making the familiar strange" important and I invested a substantial amount of time re-reading field notes to present an accurate picture of riding centres and equestrian experiences. I continually reminded myself to observe "what is going on" rather than over interpreting observations based on my prior experience of grassroots equestrianism (Morse and Richards, 2002: 149). However, it was precisely this familiarity with the routine tasks that helped me to be accepted into the research environment where I was able to ask more probing questions based on my ability to "talk horse" (Birke, 2007 , Cassidy, 2002).

There was one exception, Hengst. Here I remained on the periphery as a non participant observer despite performing routine tasks and developing a certain degree of rapport with the yard manager. When reflecting on the impact of my presence I concluded that I was viewed as "inspector" rather than becoming an integrated equestrian. This situation developed from the initial interview with the proprietor who openly stated that Hengst had recently been ostracised within the horse-world.[17] I tried to overcome my position as "inspector" by positioning myself in the café/shop location as a means of observing lessons (overlooking the main arena) and speaking to staff, riders, supporting parents and liveries. As this location sold refreshments, took payment for lessons and equipment, it was invariably busy. However, each time I ventured into the centre, my presence impacted on the environment. Conversations at times were noticeably muted, and on one occasion I was refused access altogether and asked to leave as they were "too busy".

[17] I have deliberately omitted details to retain the anonymity of this site. However, the proprietor was open about the public criticism of the site and the negative press did not lead to closure of the centre.

4.3.4.3 Informal conversations and formal interviews

My skill development in the use of informal conversations was tested with Hengst staff who acted as though my enquiries were some sort of test. By contrast, conversations with grassroots customers and liveries were straightforward. I became acutely aware of actively listening, probing and discussing issues equestrians shared about their experiences with other equestrians, equine organisations and the horse-world in general. As the field work progressed, and I engaged in constant reflection I learned that offering my assistance was a key to more relaxed conversations in which information flowed. By continually reflecting on my approach in each site, my skills developed, allowing me to capture "congruent" grassroots equestrian experiences (Becker, 1992: 210).

In contrast with these informal conversations, semi-structured interviews were arranged for specific times and ranged in duration between forty-five and ninety minutes. It was in these interviews that I was able to develop my understanding of equestrians' awareness of and engagement with the Horse Strategy. I also asked about barriers that proved challenging for them in their roles and experiences as equestrians. I tried to avoid "asking 'why' as it produces clichéd answers" instead directing attention towards exploring constraints (Coakley and Donnelly, 1999: 79). I wanted to elicit what, when and how things influenced their decisions to participate or lead equestrian businesses.

I conducted 59 formal interviews (see Table 4.2, page 101) with regional representatives of equine organisations, the riding centre proprietors/managers, and a range of equestrian participants, across the sites including staff, riders and family members. All participants were anonymised and provided with pseudonyms (see Appendix V). These interviews were conducted on site at each riding centre usually in the office or café venues. Local authority policy officers and regional representatives were interviewed at their own offices or a public location such as a hotel reception area. Each participant received an information

sheet describing the purpose and scope of the study (see Appendix VI), which was fully explained prior to obtaining signed consent (see Appendix VII). Written consent forms were signed, in the case of children by a parent or legal guardian to ensure in agreeing to participate their children would not suffer any social, physical, or psychological consequences (BSA., 2002: 4). Where a recorder was used, I ensured that participants were comfortable to proceed and I offered access to summaries of the data. Appendices VIII to XVII include the core questions that were designed to address the research questions relating to motivation for participation in equestrianism, barriers to participation, and awareness of/engagement with the Horse Strategy.

While the process of interviewing adults went smoothly, I experienced a steep learning curve in relation to interviewing children. I experienced initial difficulties in eliciting any depth of information and in some cases parents attempted to answer on behalf of their child. I was aware of my own inexperience in interviewing children and I sensed that the children were uncomfortable. As a result, I reverted to informal conversations and this allowed me to more easily discuss with the children what had inspired them to participate in equestrianism. This proved a more responsive and less invasive mode of data collection with these younger participants.

4.3.4.4 Participant diaries

To supplement the informal conversations, I also designed diary sheets (Dillman, 1983) to be completed over ten weeks and return via stamped address envelopes. The idea was to assist in the triangulation of data from informal conversations and observation. The pack included an introductory letter, detailing the purpose of the study, a consent form (signed by parents on behalf of children), a front sheet with open-ended questions, weekly diary sheets for completion and a stamped addressed envelope for return (see Appendix XVIII, XVIIII). Supplementing the diary element, open-ended questions were designed to learn about what influenced equestrians to initiate and maintain participation,

how they chose a riding centre and the role of economics in determining levels of participation.

In using diaries my original intention was to gain a sample from each centre, sufficient to capture a diversity of experiences among men, women and children or different levels of equestrian experience. First, 17 rider participants were given the opportunity to complete a diary and a further 20 riders with whom I had engaged in informal conversation volunteered to complete diaries. At Equus, diary packs were distributed to six women and six girls. At Hengst, the packs were issued to four women and six girl riders and two female livery owners. It was agreed with parents that they may assist with the completion of diary sheets. In order to counteract the prospect of a low response rate, I proactively sought out diary participants at each site visit to enquire about progress. I also sent reminder letters to reiterate the value of this data after three weeks and again after nine weeks (see Appendix XVIII).

The distribution of the packs took place in the final month of field work at Equus and Hengst, before moving onto Fohlen and Cavallo. To encourage a higher degree of engagement and potentially higher response rate to the diary method, I distributed the diary packs during the first week of field work in these two sites. At Fohlen, twenty packs were issued: to one man, one boy, four female livery owners, six female university students and four other women and four girl riders. At Cavallo, a further twenty were distributed to one male and three female livery owners, one female freelance instructor (visiting from abroad), five women and ten girl riders.

Despite the reminders and encouragement to maximise response rates across all sites, response rates varying between eight to forty percent were achieved across the four sites. Several informants stated that they had posted them, although I had not received them. Other reasons included informants leaving the riding centres (approximately five-six per cent – all four sites). For these

participants, I had recorded contact details and e-mailed, telephoned and sent letters with a view to gaining an understanding of the factors which influenced their decisions to stop riding. However, despite multiple approaches I failed to elicit a response.

Although, the diary data contained some useful insights into equestrian motivations, perceptions of riding centres and riding itself, the data could best be described as 'patchy'. With hindsight, video diaries may have been a better proposition (Buchwald *et al.*, 2009 , Rose, 2007). In particular, capturing video evidence could have been perceived as more fun to children whereas completing the sheets was perhaps synonymous with an extension of homework duties (Buchwald *et al.*, 2009 , Noyes, 2004). Although video diaries are not without limitations, not least the practicalities of loaning video equipment and the novelty of the method 'wearing off', also threatening response rates. As Buchwald *et al.*, (2009: 14) have pointed out, consideration should also be given to the relationship between the researcher and child participant when thinking about video diaries because "adults" roles puts them in a position of control and "power" over children" and this may influence how the child records information. So, while video diaries **may** have been useful, they would also have had a potential risk of producing limited data.

4.3.4.5 Participant profiles

After becoming aware that the diary sheets were not going to offer sufficient insight into equestrian experiences, I attempted to identify a number of regular riders who had declared their interest in and commitment to equestrianism. The purpose was for me to be able to gain a deeper understanding of their participation in equestrianism. The profiles included information similar to that of an inventory of background information, from which the "existing knowledge is used to inform and guide practical action" (Clarke, 1999: 35). This offered an alternative route to understanding the factors influencing decisions to ride.

Table 4.3 below shows the selected participants; using pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Table 4.3: Profile Participants

No.	Site	Name	Gender M/F	Category	Data source
1	Equus	"Alicia"	F	Novice – Adult: nervous rider	Diary/Field Notes
2	Equus	"Gareth"	M	Novice – Child: funded rider, nervous	Field Notes
3	Hengst	"Lisa" "Tracey" "James"	F F M	Novice – Child} Novice – Adult} Family Novice – Adult }	Field Notes
4	Hengst	"Adele"	F	Novice – Child: Pony club rider	Field Notes
5	Fohlen	"Penny"	F	Intermediate – Adult: nervous rider	Diary/Field Notes
6	Fohlen	"Liz"	F	Nov/Intermediate – Adult: confident rider	Diary/Field Notes
7	Cavallo	"Pete"	M	Novice – Adult: happy hacker	Field Notes
8	Cavallo	"Clara"	F	Novice – Child: confident rider	Field Notes
9	Cavallo	"Elisa"	F	Novice – Child: confident rider	Field Notes

4.4 Data management and analysis

Processes of data management and analysis were guided by the research questions, the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) and Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b). To assist with data analysis, NVivo, a qualitative software package became the primary data management tool because of its capacity to store data from interviews, documentary analysis and field notes in one place (Bazeley, 2007 , Bazeley and Richards, 2005). From the combined data and making use of NVivo, I began to examine factors associated with participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy. This cyclical process of interpreting, coding, linking and reflecting continued

throughout the data collection, analysis and writing phases of this thesis. At the conclusion of the data collection phase, three hundred and fifty-seven nodes existed. These were reviewed, analysed and reduced into a more manageable form of fifteen 'sets'. Each set was informed by the research questions concerned with motivation to participate in, and barriers to equestrianism; and engagement with the Horse Strategy.

Using the nodes, sets, trees and models that I had constructed using NVivo I reflected on the reliability of the various data sources; field notes, observations, diary sheets, documentation and policy statements to consider "whether the sets of data tells you about the same phenomena, or whether the methods yield comparable data" (Mason, 1996: 26). In terms of the four sites the triangulation of data –allowed me to see the extent to which the data could be representative of grassroots riding centres. However, I understand that NVivo is subject to "human factors," which can lead to "poor workmanship" and realised that while NVivo could provide a data management warehouse (Bazeley, 2007: 3), it could not produce my analysis.

4.4.1 Reflexivity

This helped me to explore two types of reflexivity - personal and epistemological:

> "Personal reflexivity" involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research. It also involves thinking about how the research may have affected and possibly changed us, as people and as researchers"
>
> (Willig, 2001: 10)

I acknowledged from the outset of that as an equestrian, I would be implicated within the whole research process and form part of the emergent data from riding centres. Consequently, I became part of, and was affected by the research context. I came to realise that in the role of researcher, I would facilitate "the representations of the [equestrian] experience, not experience itself" (Denzin

and Lincoln, 2003: 51). This led to my concerns regarding epistemological reflexivity – the extent to which, personal knowledge of equestrianism impacted on the research design and analysis, that:

> "[r]equires us to engage with questions such as: How has the research question defined and limited what can be "found"? How has the design of the study and the method of analysis "constructed" the data and the findings? How could the research question have been investigated differently? To what extent would this have given rise to a different understanding of the phenomenon under investigation? Thus, epistemological reflexivity encourages us to reflect upon the assumptions (about the world, about knowledge) that we have made in the course of the research, and it helps us to think about the implications of such assumptions for the research and its findings"
>
> (Willig, 2001: 32)

I dedicated a significant amount of time to reflecting on the sometimes challenging dilemma of my place in the research as an experienced equestrian (spanning four decades). In this respect, I took for granted the equestrian milieu and to an extent, acted as a "complete-member researcher" or insider. I identified with informants and experienced acceptance within the horse-world environment (Ellis and Bochner, 2003: 211). Because of my lifelong connection to equestrianism, I initially attempted to proactively detach and separate from this familiarity in pursuit of conducting objective research (Morse and Richards, 2002: 103). But as the research process progressed, I found it increasingly difficult not to deepen my connection with, nor suppress what can only be described as a passion for everything equine.

Returning to Hannerz (2003: 202, 209) a multi-site ethnography approach, with full immersion into the "entire culture and social life" was not possible. In practice I placed myself in "the translocal network of relationships" between all four sites. This helped me to gain an insight into grassroots equestrianism by collecting "data in naturalistic settings … observing and/or taking part in the common and uncommon activities" within riding centres (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002: 2) and that:

> "Postmodernism claims that writing is always partial, local, and situational and that our selves are always present no matter how hard we try to suppress them – but only partially present because in our writing we repress parts of ourselves as well. Working from that premise frees us to write material in a variety of ways – to tell and retell. There is no such thing as 'getting it right', only 'getting it' differently contoured and nuanced"
>
> (Richardson and St Pierre, 2005: 962)

Bearing in mind this notion of "getting it" and attempting to convey the equestrian experience to the reader I sought "a full, rich understanding of the context" (Willis, 2007: 240). Conscious of my own passion for equestrianism, I drew on Coffey's argument that research will necessarily include a "biographical dimension" when "retelling...people's lives" (Coffey, 1999: 115) although this does not permit the researcher engage in "an unattributed celebration of the self" (Coffey, 1999: 127). However, she confirms (1999: 158) that a degree of "emotional connectedness" to the research process "is normal and appropriate" suggesting that the researcher must find an equilibrium between maintaining aspects of the "stranger" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2006: 115) and "giving or restoring... voice" to the observed (Coffey, 1999: 129). I conclude that my personal biography relating to equestrianism has had a significant bearing on the conduct of this study. While I argue that it would not have been possible to engage with this research without my familiarity in the field, I have had to continually reflect, not only on the different stages of the research, but on my own role in it in order to ensure that I have portrayed **one** account that accurately reflects the views and experiences of research participants.

4.5 Limitations

Reflecting on the research process, there were methodological issues which arose in attempting to produce a valid and robust set of findings. Below, I identify and discuss each issue in turn and how I addressed the issues which emerged.

4.5.1 Research Design

The focus of this study in the North East of England implies some limitations in terms of generalisability. The region characterised by economic deprivation, accounts for a very small proportion of equestrianism nationally. But there is no evidence to suggest that the pattern of equestrianism in the region differs from that in other parts of the country.

Focusing on meso- and micro-levels of equestrianism to capture in detail the experiences of grassroots equestrians, regional representatives of equine organisations and local authority policy officers, the research design did not capture the views of national representatives of Defra or the BHIC. Interviews at this level would have offered a top down view - which currently relies on the content of policy documents - to extend understanding of the apparent belief at national level that achieving change in the horse world could be achieved by delegating responsibility to grassroots equestrians.

4.5.2 Methods

While observational methods and interviews worked well in the context of this study, participant diaries did not. The decision to use participant diaries, while anticipated to provide personal insight into equestrian experiences proved labour intensive for both the participants and researcher. Despite initial enthusiasm from children to write about their equestrian experiences it soon became clear that they were more comfortable vocalising, rather than writing about their activities. And, this was demonstrated in the lack of completed sheets returned. For the adults, the exercise was more successful. Even so, to gain pertinent data the structure and layout of the sheets and guidance notes require modification to elicit better quality data and remove the task for the researcher of reiterating instructions and chasing completed sheets.

4.6 Further Considerations

4.6.1 The ethics of working with animals

While I have paid attention to ethical considerations of researching with humans, and in particular with children, a question remained about the ethics of research involving animals. The literature in this area focuses on issues such as vivisection, transportation to slaughter, animal rights and the impact of research on eco-systems (Putman, 1995). However, I found no literature on conducting research in the context of equestrianism. My reason for raising this consideration is that within two sites, I felt myself questioning the levels of welfare of the horses. For example, in Equus the urban environment places the constraint of insufficient fields to 'turn-out' the horses. While Equus rotated the horses' with visits to farms for 'holidays' it did provoke the question of whether bringing the rural into the urban domain for human benefit may have negative consequences for the horse.

In another example, I observed horse care practices where I felt the health of the horse was compromised. This was a BHS approved riding centre and it raised a dilemma about whether I should report my observations. I discovered that the issue was already known to the BHS and had been investigated. These observations do raise the question of ethical considerations when studying environments where animals are present but are not the focus of investigation.

4.6.2 The art of not being governed

Another consideration which came to mind while reflecting on the data was whether equestrians perhaps choose not to engage with the Horse Strategy as a conscious decision? Do they, in effect, employ the "art of not being governed"? This concept, developed by Scott (Scott, 2011), was based on observation of the Zomia people in Southeast Asia who consciously resisted state interference and regulation of their lives by strategic use of their remote geographical location. This conscious element is linked to difficulties in predicting the behaviour of a conscious complex system (horse-world) and raises the question of whether

implementation of the Horse Strategy may also be subject to this type of conscious resistance. For example, is the reason why the exact number of horses and riders in the UK unknown because equestrians do not want to be constrained by BHIC and Defra? I return to this theme in chapter six where grassroots equestrian insights and experiences are discussed.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed account of the research process, the methods used and how this study has been approached. I have discussed the iterative process of self-reflection, researcher subjectivity and the subsequent impact on the fieldwork, and analysis. In particular, recognising that as a grassroots equestrian, my role within this study raises ethical issues not only in relation to conducting research itself, but also the degree of the impact of my pre-existing knowledge on interpretation and how I dealt with these issues in order to answer the research questions.

The following two chapters present the findings of the study and discussion of the research questions. Chapter five examines the research questions from the meso-level: regional representatives of equine organisations and local authority policy officers, while Chapter 6 provides the insights of grassroots proprietors and staff, owners, riders and family members.

5. Findings and Discussion: Regional Representatives and Local Authority Policy Officers

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on the documentary analysis and focus on the perspectives and insights of the regional representatives of equine organisations (section 5.2) and local authority policy officers (section 5.3) to address the four research questions:

1. What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?
2. What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?
3. To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?
4. How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

I start with the equine organisations (5.2) before going onto the local authority policy officers (5.3), each section starts by providing the background to the implementation to the Horse Strategy, and the roles of the different organisations and individuals involved in policy implementation.

5.2 Regional Representatives (Equine organisations)

This section introduces the implementation context and provides background information on the roles of regional representatives of equine organisations before addressing the research questions through the insights of the regional representatives.

5.2.1 The implementation context

The Horse Strategy stated that unity of the horse-world can be achieved by appealing to members of equine organisations to recruit potential new members (BHIC, 2005: 6-8). As Richards (2006: 18) reminds us "less than 1 in 12" equestrians are members of an equine organisation and in order for the industry "to be cost efficient it is imperative to incorporate many of the other 11 of 12 people involved". However, a potential barrier to achieving this vision can be the acknowledged degree of diversity and fragmentation within the equine organisations and members themselves (BHIC, 2005 , HCR, 2004).

In the early twentieth century, the various equestrian disciplines (dressage, show jumping and eventing, etc.) were unified under the original British Horse Society (BHS, see Appendix XX). Tensions arose between the different interest group, forcing a division in membership and resources. This led to the current plethora of independent equine organisations, such as British Dressage (BD), Endurance Riding (ER) and so forth. The independent equine organisations operated in this way until 1972, when the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) emerged as the National Governing Body (NGB) for equestrianism in the UK. The BEF were linked to the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI, International Governing Body of Equestrian Sport). The BEF's structure includes eighteen independent equine organisations or member bodies including the reformed BHS. Each organisation retained its own identity and members allowing fragmentation of interests, structures, governance and rules to continue. If participation in equestrianism was to be increased, unification and collaboration between the equine organisations was believed to be required.

In 1999, the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) was created in an attempt to achieve unification. Hierarchically, the BHIC was positioned between the FEI and BEF, incorporating the BEF, with direct representation from the BHS, racing (BHA) and veterinary organisations (BEVA) (see Appendix XXI). The BHIC instigated the partnership between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Welsh Assembly Government in producing the Horse Strategy.

The description of the existing organisational structure demonstrates that vested structural interests (Alford, 1975) were already present within the horse-world before the Horse Strategy existed. This highlights the complexity involved in attempting to unite diverse equine organisations. Each organisation seemingly adopts a 'silo' mentality to maintain its own vested interests. Power then remains localised in these silos. Two effects were observed in this study: (1) each group protects its own interests at the expense of integrating with others; and (2) each group has attempted to promote its own interests. This results in a

form of power based competition among groups based on their interests. The Henley Centre Report (2004) confirmed that fragmentation still exists and remains the main barrier to achieving unification and implementing an industry-wide strategy.

5.2.2 Background information: British Equestrian Federation, British Horse Society and Association of British Riding Schools

Operating under the BHIC structure, the BEF and BHS are the primary organisations responsible for implementing the Horse Strategy at local-level. Each organisations employs (BEF) Regional Development Co-ordinators (RDCs)[18], part-time (2.5 days per week) and (BHS) Regional Development Officers (RDOs)[19], full-time. And, the Strategy stated that the BHS should collaborate with the Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS) to develop grassroots equestrianism. However, the ABRS does not employ regional representatives and day-to-day member enquires are dealt with from Head Office in Horsham. This study therefore concentrates on the BEF/BHS with extracts from the ABRS where appropriate (based on a telephone and interview data).

5.2.2.1 BEF Regional Development Coordinator (RDC)

Alongside the implementation of the Horse Strategy, the BEF RDC oversees sport development, and co-ordinates the regional network partnerships to promote participation in equestrianism from grassroots to professional level. This role implements the BEF's Strategic Action Plan, which delivers aims one to three of the Horse Strategy to increase mass participation in equestrianism and raise standards throughout the horse-world to encourage "More people, more horses, more places, more medals…" (BEF, 2005, 2009).

The RDC for the North East and Yorkshire region confirmed that all appointed RDCs were former regional, national, or professional standard competitive

[18] London, West Midlands and North West, East Midlands and East, South West and South East, North East and Yorkshire.
[19] London and South East, South, South West, East, East Midlands, West Midlands, North West, North East and Yorkshire and Scotland.

equestrians. In this case, the RDC was a former professional show jumper and combined the role of RDC with that of regional coach for the show jumping foundation squad. In addition to the developmental focus, the RDC role supports increasing grassroots participation through funded projects (Sport England grants) between schools and riding centres:

> "I set up some school projects last year in Yorkshire and Hull. The riding centres were offering reduced rates for riding so that children who would ordinarily not have the chance to ride could do so. It means the children can ride in curriculum time as part of their education and it is running very well"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

The BEF's work funded by Sport England is aligned to the Framework for Sport objectives (Sport England., 2004b), in particular, the Hoof Olympic and Paralympic legacy campaigns. At the time of the study, the London 2012 Olympic Games and Hoof campaigns aim to "encourage more people to take up horse riding, driving, vaulting and volunteering. By connecting people to riding centres, schools, clubs and equestrian sporting organisations" (see www.hoofride.co.uk). And, more importantly, facilitate continued participation after the Games to meet Sport England's pledge to increase sports participation *per se* (Sport England., 2010). These campaigns were informed by the National Equine Survey (BETA, 2006), which highlighted that an untapped participant base lay not only in attracting new riders, but also lapsed riders who expressed the desire to ride again (see Appendix III). Carrie (RDC BEF) commented "The Olympic legacy has yet to be rolled-out to the regions but it will form part of my role to ensure that the member bodies (equine organisations) promote the campaign and encourage greater participation". This implies that the interests of the BEF are in part shaped by those of Sport England, which further complicates the chain of vested interests at play in the industry. During the study it became apparent that the BEF is the most powerful industry group and its relationship with Sport England legitimises its power within the hierarchy of equine groups. As a result of overseeing funding, campaigns and reporting to Head Office, a significant proportion of the RDCs role involves "answering of telephone calls and emails".

5.2.2.2 BHS Regional Development Officer (RDO)

The RDO role involves direct contact with grassroots equestrianism in contrast to the BEF RDC role. As Melissa (RDO, BHS) explained "whether it's organising events, training, or horse welfare cases … the ultimate goal is to increase membership, and with more membership we get more money and ultimately we have more clout. Basically, it boils down to cash". The RDO approaches grassroots proprietors, staff and riders to encourage their applications for BHS riding centre approval, training opportunities, instructor qualifications and individual membership, respectively. In addition, the RDO supports grassroots proprietors funding applications (to the BEF) for improving facilities and increasing participation in equestrianism as part of the schools project described earlier.

This aspect of the RDO role aligns with the first three aims of the Horse Strategy that are the focus of this thesis, specifically delegating responsibility to the BHS and ABRS to improve riding centres (BHIC, 2005: 34). They have membership schemes for riding centre proprietors: 979 BHS and 400 ABRS members respectively, of the reported 2,006 licensed riding centres and livery yards within the UK (Newsdesk, 2009b). At local-level, the BHS structure includes the RDO (salaried position), supported by the North East BHS committee (grassroots volunteers); chair, treasurer, secretary, riding and road safety officer(s), rights of way officer(s) and a welfare officer. The chair commented on the extent of support they can offer alongside their full-time occupations, "we [BHS] would love to access every livery yard and riding centre in the country, but it is all a question of expense and circulation. We are a charity and we have to watch the pennies very carefully, certainly at county level, as well as national level" (Felicity, Chair, BHS committee).

5.2.2.3 Role of the RDC and RDO in strategy implementation

The implementation context and the purpose of the regional representatives (equine organisations) within the horse-world, suggests a linear implementation process. Their roles translate policy "goals and the means for achieving them" in

a literal sense through the linkages between the BHIC and Defra as the industry leaders, and equine organisations and through the extent of their co-operation which creates "implementation chains" (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984: xxi). By examining these linkages between the chains it is possible to look at "implementation deficits" or gaps as well as breakdowns in implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984: xxi). Lipsky (1980: xii) suggested that the potential for implementation gaps can be related to the behaviour of front-line staff, for example, the RDC and RDO. Lipsky (1980: xii) therefore, claimed top-down concerns are of secondary consequence, suggesting that in order for implementation to be achieved "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures" become the drivers for the delivery of public policy at local-level. The Horse Strategy's aims are subject to local-level interpretation, translated into practice by the RDC and RDO in different ways, which produces idiosyncrasies within the policy implementation process itself. Moreover, as the RDC and RDO themselves have their own interests (that may compete or otherwise consume time that may be used for collaborating on implementing the Horse Strategy), this further complicates the implementation context.

Looking at the RDC and RDO functions (sections 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2) at local-level, the RDC adopts the position of "professional monopoliser" in controlling funding applications to Sport England, regional coaching development and resources to create the schools project (Alford and Friedland, 1975). The RDO becomes the "corporate rationaliser" as part of the implementation chain by encouraging and assisting grassroots riding centres to complete funding bids (Alford and Friedland, 1975). This is consistent with the RDOs primary role in promoting the various memberships on offer outlined in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Approval and membership schemes (equine organisations)

Scheme	Criteria	Annual costs	Benefits
Licensing by local authority	Animal welfare and Health and Safety criteria	Approx. £400*	Licensed to operate
BHS Riding Establishments (Riding Centres & Livery Yards)	Licensed by local authority Site inspection 1 x BHSAI (Advanced Instructor) employed Public liability (min. £2m)	£100 non-refundable application fee £252 membership fee dependent on size of the establishment	See Appendix XXII
BHS Individual membership	Gold Silver Bronze Corporate Trade	£42 junior/£58 adult £34 (same rates) £17 (same rates) £120 £250	See Appendix XXII
ABRS	Licensed by local authority Site inspection Public liability (min. £2m)	£100 non-refundable application fee £267.50 (single status) £282.75 (dual status)** £133.75 (≤4 horses – single status) £141.50 (≤4 horses – dual status	See Appendix XXIII

* varies according to local authority rates
** approval of a riding and examination establishment

5.2.2.4 British Horse Society and Association of British Riding Schools collaboration

Extending the discussion of the role of the BHS RDO (section 5.2.2.2), the BHIC made the BHS and ABRS responsible for developing grassroots equestrianism, particularly within riding centres. The two following sections look at why these organisations were selected for what the BHIC envisaged as a collaborative partnership and outlines the costs implications to each organisation.

The rationale for creating a partnership between the BHS and ABRS was based on the collective membership of approval schemes within grassroots equestrianism. Together these organisations represent a high proportion of

licensed riding centres and livery yards in the horse-world (69%: 49% BHS, 20% ABRS). Licensing is governed by local authorities based on a veterinarian report to ensure animal welfare and health and safety regulations are met. Approximately 700 licensed premises remain non-members of the BHS/ABRS schemes and operate on the basis of the licence. However, the figure of unlicensed yards and centres currently in operation remains unknown (Newsdesk, 2009a). Unlicensed yards and centres do not conform to professional standards of teaching and horse care management and can reduce the cost of tuition which can impact on the profitability of approved yards and centres (Newsdesk, 2009a). It was envisaged that the BHS/ABRS would try to address this issue as part of implementing the Horse Strategy's aims.

5.2.2.5 The approval and membership schemes (BHS and ABRS)

The BHS and ABRS schemes existed prior to the Horse Strategy, but now align with the aim to develop a professional network of riding establishments; small or large riding centres, stud farms (breeding), showing yards, livery yards, trekking centres or facility centres. Table 5.1 above shows the requirements a proprietor is required to meet in order to operate, together with costs and benefits. In addition, riding or trekking centres must hold a "Riding School licence for a minimum of six months" (issued by local authorities) and to "have at least one BHSAI [BHS Advanced Instructor] on your staff and have public liability insurance of at least £2,000,000" (BHS., 2011: 2) before they qualify for approved status.

On the one hand, the schemes aim to improve horse welfare and customer experience through education, training and advice (micro or grassroots level). On the other hand, BHS membership also includes lobbying and campaigning on behalf of members with external organisations (e.g. BHIC and Defra or local authorities) to act in relation to securing access to off-road riding space, safety, and responding to horse welfare cases; horse abandonment or cruelty (macro or national level) (BHS., 2012). These activities are consistent with Alford's (1975: xiv, 9) notion of "corporate rationaliser". In contrast to the ABRS, the BHS seeks

to maintain its position in the horse industry structure by using its greater market share of grassroots approved yards and centres to influence in the BHIC and Defra (Alford, 1975: 9). This makes it difficult for the BHS to give up its established "rights and privileges" to collaborate with the ABRS, which in effect would mean reducing its income, if responsibility for approved yards and centres were shared between the two organisations (Mechanic, 1974: 6, Cited in Alford, 1975). It is perhaps unsurprising that the BHS is unwilling to freely give up its power or position in the industry structure as doing so would damage its own interests. In a way, their vested interests overrule their commitment to the aims of the Horse Strategy. As part of the complexity of the horse industry system then, the decisions and actions of industry members are explained by its position in the hierarchy of vested interests.

Collaboration between these competitors in the same market (approval and qualification schemes) further presents a potential break in the "implementation chain" (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984: xxi). The use of top-down implementation methods is a complex interaction within the horse-world structure and can only be "partly controlled by formal and informal sanctions" (Haynes, 2003: 41) deployed by the BEF at local-level aligned to the Strategy's aims.

This discussion has set the implementation context, described the equine organisations involved and outlined problems that emerge in collaboration among these organisations. In the following sections, the first set of stakeholders, the BEF and BHS regional representatives, provide their perspectives and insights in relation to policy implementation that was conceptualised in chapter three as a 'complex wicked policy problem'.

5.2.3 Increasing participation in grassroots equestrianism

Regional representatives (equine organisations) central role involves persuading riding centres and equestrians to become members of their organisations. In 2006, only two to three percent of the reported 4.3 million people who regularly

ride were members of the BHS (BETA, 2006). The Horse Strategy's objective was to use this membership network to increase participation by promoting the benefits of riding and engagement with the Horse Strategy:

> "I think people need to engage with the modern BHS, I think that is the BHS has to re-evaluate and focus on access, welfare and education, qualifications, welfare and safety. I think it does a super job on those and that affects, and should reach out to everybody. Hopefully more people will support it through membership so that it does reach out to everybody"
>
> (Felicity, BHS Chairperson)

Important here is the phrase "*engage with the modern BHS*" *as* this sentence and the following one identifies the micro-level issue of engagement with the BHS, which reflects wider issues of engagement to implement the Horse Strategy. There are two aspects to this statement. The first is the issue of awareness-raising among the BHS' stakeholders to promote engagement. The second is the allocation of responsibility to individual equestrians to engage with the BHS. From this extract engagement is contingent upon 'hope'. Lowndes *et al.*, (2006a: 285) remind us that in order for engagement to occur a prerequisite is to consider "what citizens think about their engagement initiative". In this instance, the common point of interest between the BHS and the wider equestrian citizenry is the horse. The horse represents a symbol of shared interest. Yet, the BHS failure to communicate its broader interests to the equestrian community results in a lost opportunity to capitalise in this shared interest. The greater the 'worldviews' deviate from each other, the less likely engagement is to occur.

This raises an issue from the perspective of the CLEAR Framework. As discussed, grassroots equestrians are part of a 'conscious complex system' and the lack of communication networks makes it difficult to locate equestrians, let alone find out what equestrians would like the BHS to do to increase engagement and membership. One BHS initiative is to develop connections with children through the schools programme funded by Sport England. As the largest group of equestrian participants is aged between 3-21 years (see Appendix III),

collaboration with schools is a method of reducing the barriers to participation and communicating to a wider audience what the BHS do for grassroots equestrianism. Crucially, from a theoretical perspective, such an approach may help align the perception of interests between the BHS and grassroots equestrians (Alford and Friedland, 1975).

The BEF RDC felt that some progress had been made here because of the collaboration between the BEF, BHS, Educational authorities, and Sport England to include riding on the schools' curriculum (Tyzack, 2006). It was envisaged that this initiative could increase participation by "coming onto the curriculum as part of GCSE PE [debunking] … the idea of riding as 'posh' sport that only snobs support" (Newsdesk, 2008). The RDC explained the combination of specific clubs and 'taster' sessions which were running, or due to commence, aimed at increasing grassroots participation:

> "We cover five areas: school club links, Pony club, Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA), Olympic and non-Olympic disciplines. The school club links are all set up and running in Yorkshire, I also set up at the Yorkshire Academy the polocrosse[20] allowing people to go and try polo. They are going to roll that out in academies across the UK now. It seems to bring in participants, I have also organised horse riding and driving trials, where people can go to a centre and try them for the first time"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

The RDO (Melissa) added that gaining participants was not a barrier to business growth:

> "If the regular good riding centre does not have a waiting list of people to start riding then they are doing something wrong. There are a lot of people who want to learn to ride - all they want is their children to have the opportunity to learn"

Neither regional representative perceived an issue with people wanting to ride, rather a question of gaining access and having the opportunity to try. However this view is in conflict with the realities of most riding centres (discussed in

[20] A relatively new equestrian activity a combination of polo and lacrosse

chapter six), where demand appears to be problematic. Both quotes illustrate a misattribution of the engagement problem to a structural constraint - access to, and number of, horse riding centres. Structural constraints can influence participation (Elson, 2004; Ravenscroft, 2004) but in this instance the barrier appears to be at the cognitive level. The RDO and RDC comments do not address the problem of generating 'interest' undermining the potential for a shared worldview between equestrian organisations and grassroots equestrians.

Looking at what motivates people to ride, each representative described their own motivation and speculated on why others chose to participate in equestrianism:

> "For most people, me included it is about the horse, I come from farming stock so I was used to having big animals around. But the horse is different, you can develop a relationship with horses you learn their quirks and habits. For kids, mainly little girls, it is about having a pony, looking after it and being with friends. Most of them develop an interest for life, some don't, but horsey people never lose it, look at me!"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BEF)

> "People get the 'bug' you either get horses or you don't. It gets in your blood. I started riding at a very young age, my family were horsey so I was bound to ride…Whether people ride all their lives is different, traditional horsey people do, it's for the love of the horse that they muck out in all weathers, horses are like family. It has changed recently, some people ride for health reasons or as a family activity, so if I think about it like that the reasons why people ride has changed, but if they continue it's definitely a 'bug'"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

Both quotes illustrate that a common interest platform is available and therefore a common language to alleviate implementation problems. From these personal perspectives, different determinants of participation emerge; the influence of the family (Kay, 2004), household tastes (Downward, 2007) which are consistent with the Framework for Sport's "settings for change" - the influence of the home, community, workplace, education level and schooling (Sport England., 2004b). What these views further emphasise is equestrianism includes a unique

component or attractor, the horse itself, that could be readily used as a vehicle to encourage engagement with the Horse Strategy.

This is not to say that structural constraints do not exist, however. Returning to the use of clubs and taster sessions to increase participation, funding was restricted to approved riding centres, managed by the BHS/ABRS. To encourage funding submissions "rider days" were held to assist proprietors "to think about the business aspect of running a centre and be a bit more business minded from best practice examples provided" (Carrie, RDC BEF). The equine organisations, controlled access to funding creating a structural constraint in the market:

> "There has just been an innovation put forward by Sport England which is an amount of money for rural development sport which we can apply for ... This has just been launched … Also, I believe that the BHS works very closely with the development departments in terms of the bridleways provision"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

This approach shows a commitment to increasing participation by the BEF and BHS but there is a danger that the structural constraint introduces further participation problems. As Lowndes *et al.,* (2001: 215) argued, the social exclusion of one group equates to judging that "there is little public enthusiasm for participation" when the case maybe that more riding centres would like to apply for funding but are constrained by the criteria set by the BEF/BHS. Funding applications are contingent upon membership and possessing the necessary business skills to produce bids. As Carrie (RDC, BEF) pointed out, if an approved riding centre secures funding to increase participation there are business risks attached, "if they fail to deliver against agreed targets, these centres will become subject to 'claw back' from Sport England, I need to ensure this doesn't happen and select suitable centres" (Carrie, RDC BEF). This approach is not consistent with the second aim of the Horse Strategy, which calls for all riding centres to be included to create a professional network of centres (BHIC, 2005: 32-34). The claw-back initiative is a further example of divergent

interests between the BEF and riding centres, and potentially creates a distortion in market supply through the punitive use of power.

These cognitive and structural constraints, and their implications, appear in some part to explain why grassroots equestrians see little value in membership. As Melissa (RDO, BHS) described a difficulty in promoting membership to assist in developing and sustaining equestrianism:

> "It is often a complaint that people say - they do not get much for their BHS membership. But on the other hand, I thought about it in terms of Greenpeace. I am a member of Greenpeace, but I have no desire to hang off the edge of a ship in Antarctica to protest about the Penguins and global warming…so I am not quite sure why people don't see their BHS membership in the same way?...this is an organisation working towards opening access to off-road riding etc.,…BHS members want something tangible for themselves and I don't fully understand it. I think that it is the case that the BHS also fails to promote enough about what it does do with the members' money and therefore they feel they are not getting a lot for their membership"
>
> (Melissa, BHS RDO)

This last phrase suggests fragmented communication between macro and micro levels regarding the benefits of membership. The BHIC and Defra's perceptions are misaligned with those of grassroots equestrians who fail to understand the relevance of joining an equine organisation. What emerges in the context of transforming the horse-world into an industry, is a complex "wicked problem" for implementation (Roberts, 2009).

From this discussion, it seems that problems arising from different vested interests, might be resolved by appealing to the shared symbolic interest of the horse itself. Cultural change among the different stakeholder groups may then be possible without sacrificing individual interests.

5.2.4 Barriers to participation and policy engagement

The BEF RDC and BHS RDO oversee large geographical areas with limited resources and remote support from Head Offices in Warwickshire (BEF and

BHS). Multiple competing duties are attached to these posts. On the one hand, officers are expected to promote the benefits of becoming a member of the organisation, publicise national BHS campaigns (i.e. footpath access rights), liaise with local authorities and in some cases run BHS events such as management training. On the other hand, horse welfare is a priority area in dealing with horse industry and European Union regulations both linked to policy implementation. Within the Henley Centre Report (2004: 62), it was recognised that although riding centres are key to achieving the first three aims of the Horse Strategy:

> "Riding schools are sidelined within the industry. A rider has to have "reached" the Olympic disciplines before being "picked up" and supported. There is a gap between the grassroots and the promotion of sporting excellence – implying a serious cost both in terms of social inclusion but also in terms of the promotion of British sporting excellence"

BHIC and Defra (BHIC, 2005) realised that if riding centres continue to be ignored, the likelihood of increasing participation would fail. Failure to support and re-develop riding centres equates to fewer participants, enthusiasts and crucially reduced revenue to support the professional level (Richards, 2006). The 2012 Olympic Games (forthcoming at the time of the study) added an additional priority to develop Team GB (equestrian) at international level and that required new participants, many of whom usually enter equestrianism through riding centres (BHIC, 2005: 32).

Increasing and retaining participation through membership of equine organisations is not as straightforward as it appears. An influential factor can be the level of commitment of the rider:

> "It depends on what level they are at, if they are a member of a body, such as dressage or BSJA, then they are committed to improving the industry. But, if they are the very grassroots level who go and ride occasionally at a BHS centre for leisure, then they really are not interested in becoming members"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

We can see here that the BEF RDC differentiated between the types of rider and observed that infrequent leisure riders are not the target market for joining an equine organisation. Because the central objective of the regional representative role is to increase membership or promote regional squads the representatives are allocating "particular goods and services" at the point of delivery, the grassroots. Here we can see that it is within the grassroots equestrian environment that policy directives are constructed and enacted (Lipsky, 1980) by the regional representatives, first, meeting the interests of the organisation (BEF or BHS) and second, complying with the Horse Strategy.

5.2.4.1 Fragmentation and communication

The objective for the BHS/ABRS to develop grassroots riding centres and to increase participation through higher membership is complicated by the acknowledged fragmentation and lack of communication in the horse-world and the horse industry (HCR, 2004). But, a difference emerged between the RDC and RDO/BHS Chair opinions regarding elite, representative, and grassroots levels of fragmentation:

> "It [fragmentation] is reducing at regional level, because the member bodies [organisations] are having to work together on certain projects and become more accountable. We are getting better figures back from them as they need to account for the monies they spend from the funding…as far as fragmentation is concerned I have just launched the regional foundation network…This involves the Olympic disciplines working together to improve elite sport and that has never happened before, so fragmentation is definitely reducing"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

The latter aspect refers to elite level competition squads, whereas grassroots equestrianism is acknowledged as:

> "Still fragmented and there is a funny English culture where people will not get involved even if they know it will help…what do you have to do to get people onboard and buy into the Strategy?"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

> "Happy hackers are the key problem, reaching these riders and making them aware of all the work the BHS does for members and non-members is difficult. Why don't people show their appreciation by becoming a member to support future development? They just don't see it like that and won't pay £55 per annum to assist with more access to off-road networks. They don't see the need to be a member. For example, a recent 'organised rider' event took place where leaflets were put on lorry and car windows and hundreds attended, but only 4 members were achieved out of the ride, the majority were non-members who took part"
>
> (Felicity, BHS Chairperson)

This response to the BHS event reflects the RDOs earlier opinion that grassroots equestrians fail to understand where membership of the BHS tangibly benefits them. However, this failure is more likely driven by an assumption of expected compliance but makes little effort to envision a message to grassroots equestrians that communicates shared interests. The regional representatives and committee are dealing with grassroots equestrians where they do not have an understanding of the factors which will encourage greater engagement with the BHS, which is linked to implementing the Horse Strategy. A solution might be found by considering relative interests.

A key aspect of the CLEAR Framework is to look "at initiatives from the perspective and position of citizens" (or equestrians) to understand what will encourage them to engage (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 285). The CLEAR Framework see the grassroots as "consumerists" (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001a: 207) when engaging with BHS membership options, viewing the membership as a service rather than supporting the opening of off-road routes, as the BHS Chairperson makes clear. There remains a void in communicating what the BHS does outside of providing qualifications for instructors or offering insurance (this is also discussed in chapter six). But as discussed in chapter three, the horse-world is a "conscious complex system" (Geyer and Rihani, 2010). Such systems have the ability to make unpredictable choices, driven by the emergence of cognition amongst its members which makes the BHS' task of appealing to a set of socially diverse actors and meeting the majority of their needs; a complex wicked problem (Conklin, 2006).

The extent of the complex wicked problem facing the regional representatives at micro-level and the BHIC and Defra at macro-level is compounded by the lack of communication networks throughout the horse-world. The RDO and committee volunteers stated that the primary form of communicating with grassroots equestrians is by "word of mouth" because of resource constraints (time, human, and financial). The combined factors of fragmentation and the lack of communication networks adds to the complexity of trying to disseminate information to grassroots equestrians and engage them with the Horse Strategy. As Melissa (RDO, BHS) remarked "we want them to see the bigger picture of the BHS and the industry, which benefits them too" but she also acknowledged that:

> "Equestrians are highly individual, for instance the showing people, they are so focused on their showing that they are not interested in other disciplines, say the BSJA [British Show Jumping Association], and the BSJA are not interested in what the Trailblazer people are doing. People join the societies because of their horse and interest, plus the skills that it has got and they become channelled into that particular aspect of what they are doing at the time, without seeing the bigger picture, from racing, to show jumping, to horse trials everybody has their own particular interest and involvement, that's how it has always been"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

Both statements are ironic as they express self-interest over common interest. In contrast, the BEF RDC reported that the regional squads regularly "co-operate over disciplinary boundaries" (Carrie, RDC BEF), but, the RDO comments suggested otherwise and raised the issue of vested structural interests where each group serves its own interests throughout the horse-world. The evidence presented shows at grassroots level these relative positions of power over an area of interest are i) difficult to penetrate and ii) offer little opportunity to promote collaboration to create a unified industry (Alford and Friedland, 1975: 430).

The current method of communication (word of mouth) is supported by attending local and regional shows to "chat to people", pitch stands and distribute leaflets and posters or organising elite equine demonstrations and

selling BHS merchandise, books and Christmas cards to "let people know that the BHS is in existence" (Melissa, RDO BHS). This basic mode of communication however, is unlikely to place the BHS in a position to achieve the aims of the Horse Strategy or overcome the dynamic of vested interests, in part because of the constraints of its role:

> "There's not a great deal the Committee or BHS can do to assist riding centres apart from holding the fundraising events and clinics at BHS approved centres so that they can derive some additional marketing and publicity value from the events. As the BHS is a charity, the Committee do not have funds to support them in any other way and therefore as far as the Committee are concerned the riding centres have to market themselves. It was acknowledged that many of them failed to receive any income during the months of adverse weather conditions. At functions, the BHS can promote the riding centres by word of mouth, but this results in 2-3 clients coming forward not 20-30"
>
> (Felicity, BHS Chairperson)

In addition, communication networks from BHS Head Quarters to the RDO sometimes are also inefficient "I found out recently that fundamental changes were being made to my role in relation to the Hoof campaign by reading Horse and Hound, that's how good we [BHS] are at communicating!" (Melissa, RDO BHS). In relation to how the BHS have tried to communicate to non-members or 'happy hackers', the RDO also admits:

> "I am not entirely sure myself how you address that sort of thing, because it [the horse-world] is so fragmented it is a question of how to get that information to everybody who would be potentially interested or need to know? For instance, we have a Question Time event coming up after the strangles campaign and just having to think about how to get to the horse owning public and advertise to them is giving me a headache!"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

The fundamental problem it seems is one of resource constraints. For example, the RDO elaborated on some of the marketing strategies she has tried to attract attendees to events; advertisements in the local "yellow paper" (free publication in the equine section), in the BHS magazine (this is only read by existing members) and placing posters in local equine or 'tack' shops. The RDO noted

"the last time I was in a tack shop was about two months ago, so if there was anything in there, I would also have missed it. Our feed merchant delivers, so there aren't really many places where only horse people get together". A further option was posting news items on the "North" region website (part of the central BHS site). However, resource constraints have meant that "the site is out of date and this doesn't encourage people to visit it, does it?" (Melissa, RDO BHS), which further restricts interest and the possibility of attracting new members to the BHS. The nature of the budgetary, skill and channel resource constraints only adds to the complex wicked problem of increasing participation in grassroots equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy at local-level. Furthermore, the ABRS does not adopt a radically different approach because they too are resource constrained: "we liaise with the affiliated [approved] riding centres, but our concern is to provide support to the proprietors allowing them to deliver a quality service. This is backed up by our qualifications which their staff and clients can take" (ABRS, HQ representative).[21]

The evidence shows that the equine organisations are as constrained as external individuals in engaging with the Horse Strategy. Both are complex conscious systems "nested" within the horse-world (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003a). We can see that one or two regional representatives are limited in their capacity to effectively increase participation and attract new members while carrying out the other duties attached to the role. These factors add to the complex wicked policy problem of how to implement the Horse Strategy. The literature indicates that while complex wicked problems are difficult to identify and therefore resolve, they can be managed through a collaborative approach between all stakeholders in the implementation process (Conklin, 2006 , Hill and Hupe, 2009), pooling resources and developing a more integrated vision and expression of common interest. From archival data, there is evidence indicating that collaboration between the various organisations is occurring at macro-level under the BEF 'umbrella' through the "Hoof – taking back the reins" campaign.

[21] Telephone interview with ABRS Head Office, Horsham.

This campaign emanated from the National Equine Survey data (BETA, 2006, 2011), which highlighted that former riders were keen to re-engage in equestrianism (see Appendix III). In addition, the survey data also drew attention to barriers to participation, in particular, time, cost and access, which are reiterated in this study.

Further reviewing the evidence from the regional representatives of equine organisations, two additional issues emerged. First, at local-level, the BEF assumes the role of "professional monopoliser" as relative power cascades through the sub-ordinate adaptive systems to govern the BHS/ABRS (corporate rationalisers) (Alford and Friedland, 1975). Second, to maintain relative power at local-level the regional representatives work within the grassroots conscious complex system where fragmentation and the lack of communication networks limited the ability of the regional representatives to increase participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy. As the regional representatives represent a conscious complex system nested within the horse-world, they used their discretion to differentiate between (interested or disinterested) equestrians and this impacted on the level of service that riding centres and equestrians received (Lipsky, 1980). While resource constraints might be one explanation of differentiation in the allocation of resources, this does not explain the problem of discretion. Discretion is likely to be informed by the interests and biases of the individual. As stakeholder engagement and collaboration are essential to manage such a problem, exploring the extent to which local-level partnerships between i) the equine organisations (BEF, BHS and ABRS) and ii) local authorities exist is necessary to further distil the issue of participation.

5.2.4.2 Collaboration between the equine organisations and local authorities

At grassroots level, collaboration between the BEF, BHS and ABRS reflected positions of relative power and each organisation's interests, despite the vision of the Horse Strategy. Collaboration with the BEF was predominately related to securing funding:

> "They [BHS] would have to come through us, Sport England will not deal directly with a member body [organisation], all of it must come through the BEF. They deal with National Governing Bodies only in every sport. The BEF hold the money and they [BHS] apply to us for it … the BEF are asking our member bodies to bid on a project basis and they will have responsibility to run the projects. This is to ensure that we meet Sport England targets basically"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

In this statement, the BHS is a sub-ordinate member, while the BEF exercises "power over" the BHS "we have member bodies who deal with riding centres, the BHS and ABRS" (Carrie, RDC BEF). The RDC's perspective is to delegate the majority of engagement with riding centres to the BHS and ABRS: "there are lots of riding centres out there that are not affiliated [approved] to any of the bodies … we can't really go into any unaffiliated centre as it's not interested in us ... They are obviously not interested in becoming members and that is really up to the BHS and ABRS to try and get that message across" (Carrie, RDC BEF).

The power differential within the equine organisational structure cascades from the BEF to the BHS and finally the ABRS (based on a ratio of power to market share and membership levels). This also appears to cause the subordination of the interests of the 'monopoliser' to the 'rationalisers'. The RDO expands on the nature of the interaction between the organisations, "sometimes trustees [BEF/BHS] share ideas and the ABRS, I think they have little pockets of members, particularly in the Welsh area for riding and trekking centres…I don't think they have a huge national cover or the prominence of the BHS either, I don't know enough about it I have to say really" (Melissa, RDO BHS). In terms of the extent of collaboration with the RDC, Melissa commented:

> "I have not worked closely with the BEF, Head Quarters [BHS] handed down two projects; one in Leeds and one in Eston, which funds inner city kids to ride and become involved in equestrianism…The BHS only work with approved centres because we then know that our standards are being adhered too"

These examples demonstrate that although interaction between the two organisations can occur at the macro-level, partnership and networking at

regional and local level was minimal. The RDO focuses on the central purpose of her role to increase membership and work within the BHS framework reporting to the BEF. However, approved centres were subject to the decisions the RDO made in terms of which centres require support:

> "The decision is made between myself and head office so we put forward bids for areas which can easily be accessed by urban riders and also that the centre is a good example of an approved centre. The best centres are put forward to ensure we meet the funding criteria…if a centre already does a lot of work in this area, I wouldn't look to include them, as we are trying to create a network of centres offering these opportunities across the region"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

Linking back to previous observations in section 5.2.4, the RDO works within the established structure (as a corporate rationaliser) meeting the BEF/Sport England criteria, the interests of the organisations (serving approved riding centre) and decided which urban centres would be approached to bid for funding (Alford and Friedland, 1975). Based on the RDO's perception of the quality of riding centres, the representative will influence the Head Quarters decision to put forward a funding application to the BEF and the RDO's discretion is a factor that "cannot be programmed and for which machines cannot substitute" (Lipsky, 1980: 161). We can see that as part of the implementation chain, gaps emerge because of the RDO's decisions as a street-level bureaucrat influence what service approved urban riding centres received at local-level.

Several factors impact on the extent of collaboration which took place between the equine organisations. First, logistical factors of the ABRS being remote and using volunteers suggested that the practicality of collaborative partnerships to implement the Horse Strategy were limited. Second, the simple instructions from the BEF RDC for the BHS and ABRS to collaborate in developing the riding centres lacked understanding that collaboration can be incomplete, non-linear and "random" in nature (Byrne and Callaghan, in press, 2013). The RDOs perception of the lack of ABRS presence in the North East was however, confirmed through archival data. Of the forty-five approved riding centres

registered in the region, 39 are BHS approved with only six ABRS approved sites (Durham, Cleveland, Cumbria and Northumberland). And, more importantly, the market position was played out at local-level:

> "I've not noticed anything happening they are very much separate organisations…there was talk of a combined coaching certificate to be a half way measure between the BHS and ABRS qualifications but I can't find out anything about it. The communication is not there and I have the attitude that I will do it when somebody tells me I need to, as I don't have the time to look up all these things"
>
> (Angela, Inspector ABRS)

> "I am spread so thinly on the ground I don't really have strong links with the ABRS as I am so busy. It's the same as the RSPCA or WHW we don't have a close relationship until there is a need to work with each other…I have 55 centres to cover in my North area so I can't visit one per week…I need to spend more time developing the regional area but I received 60 welfare calls in County Durham alone…my workload has probably increased by only 10% in the welfare area, but if feels like much more.
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

The recurrent issue of lack of resources was evident and this left less time to liaise and form collaborative partnerships with local authorities:

> "There has been talk for over 10 years of employing a specific equine person to work with councils championing the rights of the equestrians in the local area. The problem is an old one, although the access policy officers liaise with BHS representatives, the council managers higher up do not see the need to help people with horses as they have "money and land"…The BHS access and bridleway officers could attend a different meeting every evening to various councils and having given up valuable, free information about equestrian issues therefore why would the council pay for a position when it's free? This drains the little resources the committee already has"
>
> (Felicity, BHS Chairperson)

In this section, we can summarise that at grassroots level because of the resource constraints (human, time and financial) facing regional representatives' roles, little collaboration has taken place. In relation to managing the complex wicked policy problem of implementing the Horse Strategy, the recommendations of the

Henley Centre Report (2004) to establish communication networks and gain stakeholder engagement within the horse-world have not taken place. And, as the representatives stated, the BEF, BHS and ABRS remain very separate organisations serving their own interests and those of their fee-paying members. As Alford and Friedland (1975: 430) found, the resistance to yield position and rights during policy implementation is influenced by "historically created structures [horse-world] [that] condition and limit the ranges of action possible not only by individual citizens [regional representatives] but also by organizations [BEF, BHS and ABRS] and groups [equestrians]".

5.2.4.3 An expensive sport

A significant barrier to increasing participation in equestrianism, which the regional representatives expressed, was the cost of participation in comparison to other sports (see Appendix I):

> "Riding is an expensive sport there is no getting away from that fact. Even though we are promoting the school links as much as possible, the problem is can these people carry on with the sport once the funding runs out?"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

Within the Horse Strategy, cost is not perceived as an obstacle to participation however, riding has long been associated with the public's perception of elitism (Dashper, 2011). Cost is a complex and relative issue and links to Downward's (2007) findings of the determinants of participation in that income can become a barrier to participation. Within equestrianism, the issue of cost is not straightforward and can affect all levels of rider from beginner to elite level:

> "The children who have got the "bug" and fallen in love with riding will sustain it. But there is no getting away from the fact that this *is* a very expensive sport and I don't think it is elitism anymore, I don't think people see it as only posh people ride at all…people recognise that this is an expensive sport and there is no way of reducing that…The cost of keeping a horse is high in comparison to most other sports. There have been lots of examples where people have approached me and said "there's a very talented rider, but just doesn't have the horse" and there's nothing I can do about that. The BEF cannot go out and buy horses for people

> whatever their potential. So that's the way it is and it is not going to change, it is not going to become less expensive to ride"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF, emphasis original)

As an organisation the BEF through regional representation is making progress to address monetary barriers, specifically through the Club and Hoof schemes aligned to the Horse Strategy. Despite these participation initiatives, participation rates in equestrianism have fallen since the economic crisis in 2008 (BETA, 2011, see Appendix I). What we can see is that the relevance of the drivers, settings and policy areas for participation differ from the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b: 10) that was developed under different economic conditions. The evidence so far has shown how the BEF/BHS have tried to target the main group of participants (3-21 age group) through the schools schemes, but the issue of sustaining participation after funding for such schemes finishes looks unlikely given the impact of the economic crisis from 2008 onwards. Therefore, while i) the settings for change are clearly seen to influence participation (e.g., the "home" (parental encouragement), the "community" (location – city, town, countryside), and "education" (linked to the school programme) (Sport England., 2004b)), and ii) the drivers for change (particularly "access" to "professionals" (riding centres)) also played a role in increasing participation in equestrianism, the Framework for Sport does not specifically include income or cost apart from "levels of investment" (referring to the supply-side of participation rather than being viewed as a barrier for participants). For participation in equestrianism to be increased, based on the evidence from the regional representatives, expense was a major barrier and represents another form of resource constraint on the wider aspect of participation.

5.2.4.4 Awareness and engagement with the Horse Strategy

Previous sections have discussed the differing perspectives of the RDC BEF and the RDO BHS on several topics relative to implementing the Horse Strategy. The

subject of awareness, engagement and the representatives' role in promoting the Strategy was no exception:

> "The BEF is the National Governing Body; we have all our member bodies [organisations] working towards the Strategy. It is the first time that the BEF has gone in to regional areas. Before that it was all centralised at Stoneleigh [Head Office], but now we have regional people, it should make life a little bit easier. I think they [BEF] are progressing it [Strategy] and it serves to make sure we are going in the right direction for improving participation in the industry"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

The phrasing of this commitment to the Horse Strategy is consistent with the position of the professional monopoliser; a positive image of the implementation process is presented. In contrast, the RDO portrays a different image of implementation at grassroots level:

> "The Strategy is failing at the moment, as soon as you mention Defra there is immediate negativity especially after all the recent rows over the horse tax which has not helped at all. There is distrust about how the top level can help local riders and therefore people are reluctant to become involved and see the benefits of the Strategy"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

We can see the BHS as the subordinate member of the BEF was required to put into practice some "decisions with which they disagree" (Hill, 1997: 199) and their actions come under the scrutiny of grassroots equestrians. In a broad sense, implementation problems or deficiencies might be attributed to complexity, and the inability of stakeholders to anticipate unforeseen or less predictable effects and events harmful to strategy implementation. This is consistent with the notion of a 'wicked problem', but doing so masks the competing interests of both groups and the ability of one to subordinate its interests and decisions onto another. This creates a form of conflict that may cause additional implementation deficits.

5.2.4.5 Increasing participation and implications for horse welfare

A distinct area of contention between the BHIC and Defra's desire to increase participation en masse within equestrianism from the BHS RDO involved the issue of horse welfare. Since the economic crises in 2008, the RDO commented that the rise in the number of welfare incidents was alarming:

> "The welfare aspect of the job has increased in the past 6 months, I think due to the economic situation, but also too many people have bought horses in the past and not been able to care for them properly…I would like to see a compulsory test introduced before someone is eligible to own a horse, this would be immensely beneficial to horses and the industry. But the question of enforcement would be an issue, who would police it? That's a big problem for the industry for any new ideas is the question of enforcement and policing… I am seeing so many cases of ill treatment in a country of horse lovers…But again it's a question of funds and who has any spare cash to help horses in the current climate? Not the government I would suspect...If the BHS could fund a part-time or another full-time person it would make a big difference and then you could tackle more of the issues on a regional basis and organise meetings with proprietors, land owners and equestrians"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

> "Ok, let's talk about passports and micro-chipping, this was supposed to be compulsory from July 2009, but trading standards have not been involved and the NED [National Equestrian Database] is improving, but still far from efficient. These are long term issues that the industry has to chip away at due to the resistance to change in the horsey culture and distrust. Take for instance horse sales, I have been to some and I would suspect that over 50% had counterfeit passports but who was there to check them? Nobody. Surely this would be an ideal venue for officers to police sales and check that all the paper work and chips are in place. That is going to be one of my pet projects this year I think. Also how is the system fair when there are no-go communities? The travelling fraternities have their horses on council land you can see the extent of the problem around here, there is probably one horse to every 5 people. But who would go in there? It is not going in, but they then find out where you live and come and torch your property. Trading standards are terrified of them, so how is the industry going to cope?"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

The implications of these concerns from the representatives dealing with grassroots issues first hand, demonstrates that in emphasising increasing participation, the potential risk to horse welfare has not been thoroughly considered. As participation increases, accompanied by the reported low levels of horse care knowledge, and disengagement with the BHS continues, then a potential unforeseen risk is a continued rise in equine welfare cases. In order to meet the Horse Strategy's aims, the RDO and the regional BHS committee volunteers address welfare issues and the RDO reaffirmed the call for the industry to improve participation experiences not only for the rider, but also to safeguard the horse against abuse:

> "It is like with any industry there needs to be an associated body and a regulatory body who needs to oversee and police regulation. For instance, like registers we have for freelance instructors, they need to promote the fact that they are BHS approved instructors and hopefully this will eradicate people who are unqualified and not registered from undercutting them and taking their business"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

For example, the National Equine Database (NED) launched in 2008 and linked to the passport system was envisaged to capture and control the details of all horses in the UK (Suggett, 2008). Prior to the launch it was admitted that in preparation, flaws in the system had emerged. The NED held details for approximately 1,000,000 of the estimated 1.35 million horses owned in the UK, based on 2006 (BETA) figures. However, within that figure several duplicates and recording of dead horses existed, in short, not an accurate reflection of the actual number of horses owned (Suggett, 2007: 5-6). Recently, the degree of complexity and required resources to maintain the system became apparent as Defra announced that NED would form part of wider budgetary cuts and closed the system in September 2012 (Newsdesk, 2012).

Alongside the consequences of unregulated participation, networks of co-operation do not exist between the equine organisations and local councils to confront the issue of unlicensed yards and riding centres. Riding centres are legally required to comply with Defra legislation, health and safety, liability and

council inspections (BHIC, 2005). However, livery yards can be created without such legalities or subject to an inspection, and many farmers were encouraged to diversify into livery businesses supported by funding to counteract the effects of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) (Turner *et al.*, 2006). In turn, they provide a cheaper alternative to approved riding centres, which increases the risk of closure and further restricts access to riding. The RDO expressed adopting the 'European system' of horse ownership:

> "You have to pass a few tests, which may include being able to put the saddle on the horse before you actually get on, it would not be a bad thing. You would not want to be sailing a boat without knowing how to do the rigging or put up the sails or anything that you need to do, so why should it be different for a horse? You should understand how to put the bridle and the saddle on particularly the importance of the girth prior to actually getting on the horse and riding"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

These observations raise a fundamental issue for policy implementation that further increases complexity: implementation is a dynamic process and unforeseen or counteracting outcomes are possible during implementation. In this instance, the issue is one of horse safety. The nature of unforeseen consequences and counteracting outcomes may delay or compromise policy implementation. Worse, there is a danger of these issues clouding the attribution of failure.

5.2.4.6 Summary of the perspectives and insights from regional representatives (equine organisations)

In the preceding sections, the regional representatives from the BEF and BHS were found to have differing views on how progress was being made towards the two implementation challenges of i) increasing participation in equestrianism and ii) engaging grassroots stakeholders. Ultimately the Horse Strategy aims to achieve the envisaged transformation to a Horse Industry. Significant barriers were found to effective implementation, in particular the recurrent issues of fragmentation, vested interests, lack of communication networks and insufficient resources at regional level to efficiently implement the Strategy's aims (1-3). For

internal fragmentation between equine organisations, initial signs of collaboration at the macro-level emerged. For example, at the BEF Head Office in Warwickshire, the building houses several member bodies (organisations). Previously, despite the close proximity of offices, internal communication networks were not established. Now "people will go up and down stairs and into others offices, so communication is happening reducing fragmentation" (Carrie, RDC BEF). Moreover, the regional networks and creation of RDCs to liaise with equine organisation representatives decentralises communication avenues for equestrians, providing a point of contact at local-level. The RDC expanded on the progression towards fragmentation reduction and improved engagement at macro-level:

> "You are changing people's mindsets, it has been a massive task to get all the Olympic disciplines in one room and work together, it has been hard, it took almost a year to get them together and agree on the format!"
>
> (Carrie, RDC BEF)

The reference to the concept of changing a 'mind-set' in order to promote collaboration, to engage is "dialogue" and exchange ideas, is a key step towards managing the complex wicked problem of creating a unified industry (Conklin, 2006). Acknowledged within the Framework for Sport literature (Sport England., 2004b: 8-10) progressing from the intention to acting out changes in a system is incremental in nature, particularly when changing mind-sets, as the RDC pointed out, where in order to understand the 'reality' of engaging equestrians to implement the aims of the Horse Strategy we must consider the "multidimensional" aspects of changing from the horse-world to a horse-industry (Morin, 2008: 100). The evidence in this section from the regional representatives demonstrated that the conscious complex systems within the horse-world need to be linked by recognising that "our thoughts must necessarily distinguish [between them], but not isolate from each other" (Morin, 2008: 100). This research demonstrates that the disconnect appears to stem from the vested interests of each stakeholder, causing decisions to align to power

and not necessarily to the strategy. A basis to communicate shared interests seems possible in terms of the symbolic nature of the horse.

In addition, the RDO offered an account of where the industry could assist to develop communication networks and begin to collaborate at grassroots level to increase participation:

> "You could argue that the BHS has not offered enough training to make it easy for proprietors to understand how to deal with customers and not just horses, they need to modernise. In many instances, riding schools have to catch up with other businesses dealing with customers and get on board with their practices and perhaps share good practice and network between themselves. You mention risk assessment to most people and they blanch, but really it is something they already have in their heads it is just a case of putting it onto paper in a presentable fashion that their insurers will be happy with"
>
> (Melissa, RDO BHS)

The overview of the regional representatives' perspectives and insights demonstrate that little progress at grassroots level has occurred since the launch of the Horse Strategy in 2005. The Henley Centre Report's (2004) recommendation to establish communication networks and start to reverse fragmentations and distrust of the equine organisations, BHIC and Defra by grassroots equestrians does not appear to have been implemented due to competing and non-aligned interests.

Boxes 5.1 and 5.2 below draw together the main findings from this section, in relation to the two challenges of implementing the Horse Strategy i) increasing participation in equestrianism and ii) engaging grassroots stakeholders with the aims of the Strategy and creating the necessary communication to achieve the envisaged transformation to a Horse Industry.

Box 5.1 Critical insight into barriers to increasing participation in equestrianism

- Only able to liaise with members and approved riding centres.
- Single representative covers a vast geographical area – resource constraints to fulfilling the requirements of the role.
- Lack of communication networks to promote how equine organisations work for all equestrians and horses.
- Internal communication networks fail – representatives occasionally find out from members or Horse and Hound magazine of new protocols or schemes provided by their organisations.
- Financial reward for the role is limited.
- Difficulty in delivering the aims of the Strategy because of irrelevance to members.
- Lack of collaboration between local authorities, members and horse-world.
- The aims of the Horse Strategy are perceived as too great and wide ranging, there are many factors to encouraging participation with the policy and in riding activities – the aims of the Strategy should be reduced to make implementation easier to achieve.
- The Horse Strategy will be completely irrelevant for several sectors of the horse-world.
- Introduce a horse care 'proficiency' test to ensure people are capable of owning and caring for a horse to reduce the level of horse welfare cases.
- Communication with "happy hackers" is impossible and impacts on the regional representatives' role.

Box 5.2 Critical insight into improving engagement with the Horse Strategy

BEF:

- Promote membership of equine organisations
- Promote participation in equine sports whilst accepting that "cost" maybe a prohibitive factor
- Sport England funding to be nationwide for equine sports/projects
- More partnerships to be created to promote the benefits of equestrianism
- Create improved networks of communication with equine organisations in relation to riding centres becoming aware of projects/finding (BHS/ABRS)
- Provide workshops for proprietors of riding centres to improve their business skills and awareness of the Strategy and how to apply for funding to improve facilities.

BHS:

- Industry to assist in addressing fragmentation: new communication/marketing strategies and website development.
- Increase the number of regional representatives.
- Develop local networks to target members and "happy hacker" participants
- Network with BEF RDC/Councils to fund equestrian projects
- Implement recommendations from previous equestrian research conducted at local-level. This would allow specific regional issues to be addressed.

5.3 Local authority policy officers: background information

To broaden the analysis and evaluation of participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy, local authority policy officers were also interviewed. While the two councils in this study had limited connections to equestrianism at local-level, within each area, the councils oversee public rights of way and maintain access to off-road routes (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007 , Tyne and Wear Council Forum., 2005). Off-road routes catered for cyclists and walkers, but the issue of equestrian access came to the attention of the local authority policy officers in the North (Tyne and Wear) and South (County Durham) through increasing pressure from grassroots equestrians (BHS riding clubs). For the North, local BHS equestrians contacted the policy officers directly whereas in the South, research into equestrian needs commenced in 2003 prior to the Horse Strategy. The following sections present the perspectives and insights from these officers in relation to the four research questions while examining their role in implementing the Horse Strategy. In doing so, a broader

analysis of vested interests and street-level bureaucracy is possible to understand the 'wicked problem' posed by the challenge of implementing the Strategy.

5.3.1 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) and increasing participation

Prior to the RoWIP project, regular meetings were already established between grassroots equestrians and the councils to address access to off-road routes. One major issue was funding "there has been given huge amounts of money to cyclists and they enjoy a greater profile than the needs of the riders and they resent that, it is an issue that we see coming up more and more actually" (Brad, policy officer – Northern area). In the Northern area, two local BHS riding clubs lobbied the policy officers to discuss access to off-road route access: "there used to be one main local group that represented riders North and South of the river, but about 6-7 years ago there were some personality clashes within the group and two groups were born, splitting the riding clubs between North and South of the river" (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area):

> "In 2003 there was pressure from the riding fraternity, which was placing pressure on the council to improve access to established routes etc., even though it was not perhaps calling for a specific Horse Strategy which is what we have ended up with"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area)

Pressure from the riding clubs suggests evidence of vested interests being used to leverage local policy officers. The result of lobbying led to the realisation that unlike cycling and walking equestrianism was not well understood and was given low priority during policy meetings:

> "At that time I was working for another local authority and we were looking to produce a [RoWIP-based] Horse Strategy for access and had completed some preliminary work, then there was a gap and I came in, it wasn't top priority and went on the back burner again"
>
> (Brad, policy officer - Northern area)

However, the RoWIP Horse Strategy was produced by the actions of the policy officers, which is indicative of the subversion to external interests by local policy officers:

> "We were a little sneaky in the fact that we pushed it through as an appendix to the RoWIP. But, we can pull it out of there and make it an official document if we need to. Our plan was to put it in hoping nobody would notice and take issue, they didn't, so we did it all in one go and it's had approval from all 5 authorities, so it kind of snuck in through the back door in a way"
>
> (Brad, policy officer – Northern area)

> "Riding was a relatively ageless and classless sport. However, there is a large gender imbalance with women and girls having much higher engagement rates than men and boys. A significant minority of equestrians, that is those who actually own horses, account for the vast majority of engagement. Whilst the programme of research undertaken is not representative of the average equestrian, it does reflect the views of horse owners who are responsible for the majority of riding occasions and who therefore have the most to gain from RoWIPs"
>
> (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007: 2)

It is of interest to note then that once these local policy officers became aware of the equestrians' needs; the policy officers themselves become street-level bureaucrats, in part responsible for the implementation of the national Horse Strategy. There appears to be some subversion of the interests of the equestrians in this instance, resulting from the commitment of the policy officers to consider the effects of policy changes on all stakeholders and not just lobbyists.

Based on the RoWIP research, some equestrians were not using legal rights of way and according to the riding clubs this was in response to safety concerns. The council responded with a pledge which is aligned to the Horse Strategy:

> "Enable equestrian activity to take place, as safely as possible, across Tyne and Wear on the road and bridleway network through the promotion and creation of regional, borough and local bridle route networks within the framework of the development of the RoWIP"
>
> (Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2007: 3)

However, the local authority policy officers made the decision that during RoWIP implementation engaging equestrians was necessary:

> "I think that the liaison with the horse clubs was a step forward and they felt they were making progress too, as we do have some RoW issues which are very long standing. I would say that the majority of these outstanding cases directly affect horse riders and the other thing to remember is that in the last few years there has been a dramatic rise in the cycle lobby"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area)

By contrast, the Southern local authority policy officers, were well informed about strategies addressing equestrianism across the whole region (North and South):

> "We have always been aware of equestrian needs perhaps differently to the RoWIP guys in Gateshead being a more urban authority. But we are more rurally based and been aware of the rural implications, just never had any real evidence to back it up"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

The approach to address equestrian needs commenced in 2003 (DCC, 2003):

> "We had done this feasibility study in 2003 ahead of the RoWIP process, so the recommendations from that identified the case for areas of greatest equestrian need. So the lack of bridleways that is, the demand exceeds the bridleways on the ground, so we already had that information anyway. We also carried out another study in 2006 to tie in with the RoWIP process"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern Region)

The policy officers liaised with local-level BHS representatives to inform the council of any further issues in relation to equestrianism that required attention:

> "We work with the bridleways officer. She sits on our Local Access Forum (LAF) which meets 4 times a year. We used to have a separate liaison group that the BHS was involved with, but we have folded that now"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

There were also difficulties between LAF meetings to disseminate information to the BHS regarding the opportunity of new equestrian public routes:

> "It would be good to let them know they are missing out on routes because enough interest has not been expressed or we are unaware that riders want to use those areas. In a way, if they were aware and a bit more organised they would realise that it was how you actually got access to areas off road more easily. If you sit back and don't do anything then you end up getting overlooked. But there is a growing lobby now, particularly with regard to beach access, mainly through the BHS to say 'we want a piece of this'"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

There appears to be evidence of a joined up approach between equestrians and local policy officers in this instance to address the concerns of equestrians about route access. The context (route access) merely provides the subject of their engagement but what is more important is the extent to which policy officers, likely driven by a willingness to subvert the interests of their superiors to accommodate those of equestrians. Moreover, there was an apparent public interest issue that the equestrians did not necessarily recognise that further established an interface with the policy officers. For example, a 2009 report summarised the main points to address and legalities linked to equestrian access and demand. Evidence showed that equestrians rode illegally because the designated routes for horses were insufficient to meet recreational demand with "only 26.7km/16.6 miles or, 12% of public rights of way… available to equestrians" (DCC and LAF, 2009: 5). The railway paths in the area provided a further "115km/68.5 miles" of off-road routes, however, not all were open to equestrians (DCC and LAF, 2009: 5). The led to the conclusion that the development of a regional network was required otherwise breaches of public rights of way would continue (DCC and LAF, 2009: 5). An alternative was to access "permissive routes" across private land to increase the bridleway network

(DCC and LAF, 2009: 5). In short, the priority to bring together all these options with the creation of a network which would meet the demands of walkers, cyclists and equestrians was suggested to address the issue of illegal use of off-road routes by equestrians under RoWIP in the Southern area. Coincidentally, there was a common interest among these stakeholders that brought them together to address issues relevant to the Horse Strategy and reflecting aspects of the complex systems both operate in. It remains that a more purposeful attempt at seeking and setting a common agenda might enable further benefits to implementation in this respect.

An area of difficulty experienced by both sets of local authority policy officers came from the councillors' attitudes towards equestrianism, which presented a barrier to increasing participation.

5.3.2 Barriers to participation

5.3.2.1 Perceptions of equestrianism

During RoWIP internal meetings equestrianism and access requirements were met with scepticism from the policy officers' senior managers and councillors:

> "I am on the committee of recreation and sport workstream…it is quite interesting to get them [managers and councillors] used to talking about it [equestrianism] as people do just laugh every time it is raised, in a nervous way, sort of 'moving on' way. They don't know much about it, so they feel uncomfortable, I don't know that much about it, but I think it should be recognised and discussed because it is really important in the county. There are opportunities that are being missed, to me it is an amazing way to tie together the brilliant countryside we've got and a really important activity that people want to do and are doing"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer - Northern area)

> "It definitely has the image problem with councillors and politicians yes, it is when we deal with other officers who don't really think about them [equestrians] and when you point it out to them, that is the image that comes through. Horse mean money and therefore they don't need assistance, access or support"
>
> (Robert, policy officer - Southern area)

> "Mountain biking is perceived as a legitimate way to spend your money, where a horse isn't…they [council members] still have the traditional image people of a land owner sat on a horse looking down at the 'common people' and that's how they view riders"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer - Northern area)

These examples provide evidence of competing worldviews between policy offers, councillors and equestrians. Also, because this is now an open system (involving parties external to the equestrian community), policy officers and councillors as decision–makers are potentially biased by the vested interests of other lobbying groups (e.g. cyclists, walkers). Indeed, these examples show that within both local authorities, perceptions of equestrianism are linked to wealth and class, despite the evidence suggesting otherwise:

> "Those who own horses around here, don't go on holiday, they don't have a car that is all they do, ride. That is what they spend their money on, think about all the things you do with your money and that's what they choose to do with their horse [derived from the 2003 study]"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer - Southern area)

The policy officers perceived that a reason for this negative view of equestrianism was based on councillors' experiences with equestrians, as witnessed in the media:

> "There was an incident the other week, where a horse had broken free was knocked down, but it was on council land and nobody knew who owned it. The RSPCA were called, but nobody knew who was taking responsibility for the disposal of the body and it had to be put down by the vet. This gives the impression that nobody is responsible for horses and it gives the horse-world bad press really"
>
> (Robert, policy officer - Southern area)

These quotes support the notion of biased worldviews which risks the creation of external and additional structural constraints for equestrianism. For example, in addition to this negative experience, the policy officers were asked by senior managers for a register of equestrians and this caused a further barrier in

discussions because such documentation did not exist and the research in the Northern area found:

> "There are a high proportion of 'latent' horse owners or 'happy hackers' where they are not in livery yards or other equine establishments but actually tether or graze their horses illegally and keep them in people's back yards. Horse ownership is online with the national picture, but the latent demand causes problems, the issue is crossing over into welfare issues because of the change in ownership"
>
> (Brad, policy officer – Northern area)

This negative perception was felt to contribute to the council's preference to focus on addressing the concerns of cyclists' and walkers' access needs rather than engage with equestrianism:

> "But there are probably reasons behind this like, cycling is an easier mode of transport and promoted to replace people taking their cars where people couldn't really take a horse, plus the health and fitness benefits and there are more cyclists than riders"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area)

> "I am sure after the Tees Forest Report [McAuley and McGee 2005] they were more moved in terms of promoting equine tourism in the region. I think we had a couple of meetings regionally and they presented their findings to One North East and the tourism sector. What they were saying was they needed a regional equine strategy. There is a strategy aimed at walker's coming to the region or wanting to walk here and cycling, again missing equestrian tourism, but again nothing has ever come of it"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

It is apparent that the Horse Strategy must consider the interests or responses of groups outside of its own microcosm. Therein, it becomes the task of equestrian organisations and grassroots equestrians to effectively convey their interests to such external stakeholders and decision-makers. This expands the nature of the complexity surrounding policy implementation as biases and competing interests from other external groups may jeopardise policy implementation in unforeseen ways. The notion of "monopolisers" and "rationalisers" is then

extended and these rules may be subordinated depending on 'who' has relative power (in bargaining terms) (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , North and Peckham, 2001).

5.3.2.2 Contacting grassroots equestrians and funding

The challenge for the policy officers to include increasing equestrian participation in RoWIP is two-fold. First, persuading internal stakeholders that equestrian participation, activities, and businesses require assistance, access to land and support, and second, gaining recognition of riding as a 'sport' as well as a leisure activity to be considered as part of "the health and sport policy to benefit well-being, rather than just RoWIP" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area). The policy officers expressed concern that categorising equestrianism in this manner, impacted on promoting participation because riding did not feature in health and fitness promotions within council marketing strategies:

> "It [riding] gets overlooked people get very uncomfortable with it they don't see it as a sport or a physical activity, which I think is really interesting. But it is an exercise that is outdoors, physical and good for your health, but people see it more as a recreation pursuit only"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer - Southern area)

Both councillors and the public are included in this description so communication needs to be both internally to the horse-world and to the broader general public by equine organisations, BHIC and Defra to increase participation and engagement. The complexity added by these broader social actors therefore needs accounting for.

A further challenge was gathering evidence to support funding bids to improve participation at local-level. Contacting grassroots equestrians proved difficult (to gather evidence):

> "The absence of a register of equestrians, livery yards, businesses and riding centres causes us major headaches…we were trying to access funding for bridleways as opposed to people riding on roads, as the planners wanted data on

> the number of accidents reported. Of course if they [equestrians] reported accidents it would be in their favour. We could then repeat the survey across the county, but for funding we need evidence based data and it doesn't exist for the number of road incidents. Again, it's difficult to contact these people to make them aware of the access they could potentially be missing out on"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

The challenge is compounded by the lack of direct communication networks into the horse-world. When the policy officers did manage to make contact with equestrian groups to gain their input into access routes, a further complication developed as a councillor overruled the policy officers' suggestions:

> "Equine groups had been promised that when it [park facilities] was developed they would be included in the RoW for that area as they had used it for years. One councillor ignored this and pushed it through designating it only walking/cycling routes. So with a lot of negotiation we did manage to get the council to change the plans and open up access for equestrians. I think it is a good example of how a council like ours need to respond positively not to the demands, but the needs of user groups, so addressing calls from riders who say they would like to ride in a certain area to create a good route but can't and we can investigate and hopefully come up with a workable solution for all users and landowners"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer - Northern area)

This extract shows the willingness of the local authority policy officers to collaborate with equestrians and they are prepared to challenge the councillors' position to meet all users' needs. The policy officers demonstrated an awareness of, and have experienced co-operation with equestrians to assist in identification of route conflicts and act as an intermediary to negotiate land access. From a CLEAR Framework perspective then, a starting point is possible from the positive nature of the policy officers towards equestrians, whether that be because of some historical linkage or to their broader desire to accommodate stakeholders as part of their professional identity (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a).

Despite positive experiences with riding clubs, meeting 'disengaged' or 'happy hackers' gave the policy officers additional problems:

> "Traditionally, ramblers associations and cycling associations are much more forthright, they tend to contact us, whereas the equestrian world tends to be more remote, we tend to have to try and contact them you may get one or two really good representatives who want to work with us, which is really positive. But it doesn't tend to be the same number of reports for route upgrades or issues coming through from equestrians as the cyclists"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area)

And the Northern policy officers' contact with equestrians also varied:

> "They are not happy when I talk to them! These riders haven't gone through the Pony Club or riding school route to learn horse etiquette. In my experience they are very narrow minded people, they are blinkered (no pun intended!) and have very little knowledge of the issues surrounding access or what are the responsibilities of the council, etc. They are unaware of the legal implications and the younger members of this category are riding in a dangerous and anti-social manner and I could go on, they are not easy people for us to deal with and cause a lot of problems"
>
> (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area)

> "They are outside the formal process going on between the riding groups and the council, and damaging that environment and spoiling it for riders and other users. It is very, very difficult to reach these people to make them aware of the issues that are ongoing…We said before there are young riders who have gone through the system, Pony Club and riding centres, they have discipline and know what is and what is not acceptable, but this group just seem oblivious to the rules"
>
> (Brad, policy officer – Northern area)

The difficulty faced by the local authority was one of complexity of competing interest groups operating simultaneously towards a similar end (e.g. access), but with their own different vested interests. This adds a network of conscious complex systems (unlike nested ones) that compete with each other and use power to promote their ends. This is likely to be at the expense of others (e.g. cyclists versus equestrians). The distribution of power in this instance may hinder greater stakeholder participation because ambitions of perceptions of what is possible may be suppressed (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , Lukes, 2005). It also raises issues of how the BEF and BHS must compete with these other groups for legitimacy.

Looking at the way the local authority policy officers approached equestrians to engage with RoWIP developments, it was reactive in nature:

> "I think what happened was the need for somebody to co-ordinate finding out about equestrian participation…the BHS local officers could only allocate so much time and I was getting paid to do it, so they did the field work and based on their information and liaison within the horse-world, I produced the Horse Strategy as part of the RoWIP… they did the leg work and I did all the recording so the maps came back with the lines on and I had to try and decipher them"
>
> (Brad, policy officer – Northern area)

A similar approach happened in the Southern region, where access concerns were usually raised by a direct approach from equestrians:

> "From time to time, we get some people who contact us to say they have a few horses or they are setting up a livery yard, where can we ride? They have not done that research first, instead buying a farm with nice buildings to set up a livery and the truth is there's no bridleways in the area. They end up riding without permission or riding on the roads, which is always risky. They just don't seem as organised as the cyclists and rambler associations. We have always has good relationships with the BHS in the county, but it varies you could have a very active representative in one area, and a non-proactive representative in another area. So you have the situation where sometimes you don't get much back at all. Well I don't know how many riders are members of the BHS? Do they have a stream of reporting within the body or are they just happy hackers?"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

It is also important to note that the 'representatives' cited here are the volunteers forming part of the local-level BHS committee rather than the paid BHS RDO for the whole of the North region (covering Northern and Southern council areas).

Several issues arise from these extracts which demonstrate the complex wicked policy problem for BHIC and Defra. On the one hand, information regarding local-level equestrian needs is presented in a haphazard manner to the policy officers and this meets with internal resistance because of negative perceptions. On the other hand, the lack of a national register of riding establishments and

businesses hinders the officers' ability to secure funding because of lack of evidence. This links to the difficulties in dealing with a diverse range of socially complex actors. Not only do the officers want to take into consideration equestrian requirements, but they also have to address cycling and ramblers needs as well. What does emerge is the local authority policy officers' willingness to make decisions to challenge the councillors in the positions of power and getting issues on the agenda 'through the backdoor'. This is symptomatic of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980). This suggests that they are using their own discretion to push forward the RoWIP agenda and is consistent with the CLEAR Framework's solution criteria where participants feel part of the implementation process. Importantly, they receive evidence that their thoughts and requirements are considered (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 286), which may appease dissonance caused by the competing vested interests of other stakeholder groups.

It is also worth considering the operating model of the BHS with one person to cover the local area (RDO) and reliance upon the BHS committee volunteers to support with access and other issues:

> "We have worked so hard, it [BHS] does really work for every horse and rider, all the bridleways are for everybody not just members. Welfare is an issue for every horse, again not just member's horses. I would be upset if the public still thought it was an elitist organisation, as it really is reaching out to everybody, through TREC, through Hunter Trials, through courses, through events and clinics, through the marketing system. I really do think that it is trying to reach every person in the horse-world, whatever their commitment, level, age or stage. I think the BHS has something for everybody, even if it is just Christmas cards"
>
> (Felicity, Chairperson – BHS committee)

This example highlights the fragmentation and lack of an effective communication networks within both the horse-world and with the general public (including councillors) which constrains the influence the BHS can have within council policies affecting equestrianism at local-level. Involvement in the key decision-making processes regarding access to off-road riding is restricted to

the key individuals; the street-level bureaucrats within local-level policy implementation. This point that the BHS are lacking local-level impact is exemplified when it was found that only 20 of the 187 respondents for the feasibility study were BHS members (DCC and LAF, 2009: 8).

Specific problems were felt to damage participation on off-road routes for other riders because of the large numbers of 'happy hackers' riding outside the equine establishments. The policy officers established an off-road network with landowners where permissible routes had been negotiated and maintained through partnership agreements, but the 'happy hackers' risked jeopardising these agreements:

> "The landowners, the Church commission and the National Trust have set up a network of approved routes upgrading the footpaths to riding status across their land, but this project is threatened by these groups of irresponsible riders as they keep riding off the agreed routes"
>
> (Brad, policy officer – Northern area)

The implications of the actions of these groups were also affecting the Southern areas attempts to improve participation because members of the local public objected to riders, "again it is down to individuals, there was lots of problems in Easington to do with horses being tied in fields and also horses walking down the High Street and defecating! People were in outrage about these things and who should 'pooh pick'" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area).

Reflecting on fragmentation and lack of communication networks within the grassroots, at the time of the study, part of the permissible routes project was to include the objective of establishing an "official register of riding centres or livery yards" (Robert, policy officer – Southern area). In relation to promoting participation and assisting in the development of access networks this role usually rested on one or two dedicated 'core' equestrians in order to make things happen within riding communities:

> "One of them [equestrian] knew all the local landowners she knew all the lingo, very confident, incredibly capable woman. She would approach them and say we are going to receive access funding, so can we put a nice bridle handle on that gate or put a gate next to a walking sty for instance. She achieved much more than we achieved as the council, with the land owners it was always a battle, but because she was local and accessing funding, rather than us trying to force people into making improvements or maintaining the paths to the right level it worked…We think if we could have somebody like that in each parish, it would make things so much easier"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area)

The benefits of immediate local knowledge and networks based on trust of "knowing" the landowners as opposed to an "official" from the council proposing the identical system of routes are apparent. An individual that is an "insider" in comparison to an outsider to an interest group is more likely to be accepted as they have greater legitimacy with that audience, unless the outsider can communicate in a shared language (e.g. ideology, values and principles) (Ellis and Bochner, 2003). Furthermore, within the council system, the duties to deal with access are "divided up between lots and lots of people, we are doing as much as we can with everything else that goes on" (Robert, policy officer – Southern area). The difficulties experienced in communicating with equestrians by both sets of policy officers impacted on obtaining funds to support participation in equestrianism and a lack of expertise in equestrianism. "We don't have anybody on our staff qualified to do it … I mean we do have one or two RoW officers who ride, but nobody specifically designated to the role or someone who is knowledgeable about these things, it would be nice if we did" (Robert, policy officer – Southern area).

5.3.2.3 Funding for equestrian access projects

As discussed in the previous sections, funding under RoWIP policy is considered jointly for ramblers and cyclists. In order to place further funding bids to support expansion of the existing bridleways network the policy officers in both areas required evidence to demonstrate equestrian participation and demand. Mirroring the communication methods used within the BHS and the horse-world, "word of mouth" was used to gain access to equestrianism for research purposes:

> "The researcher for the 2006 study had problems getting hold of people in the first place and that was one of the major issues with the whole project how do you find them? It snowballed, some people knew some in one area and then passed the research onto another yard and so it continued until we had a sample"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area)

It is useful to consider that the research access was secured and the DCC study published in 2009, but the evidence gathered does not guarantee continued support or implementation of the findings. For example, a regional "Horse Strategy" (not to be confused with the national Horse Strategy) commissioned in 2005 by the Tees Valley Council, addressed areas for improvement and suggested closer partnerships and collaboration between equine organisations, local councils and grassroots equestrians to enhance the horse industry's potential and further contribute to the local economy (McAuley and McGee, 2005). Both sets of policy officers recall meetings to include equestrianism within tourism policy and access to routes used by walkers and cyclists within the form of a regional Horse Strategy:

> "I am on the committee of recreation and sport workstream. So it is a whole new range of colleagues that I had not worked with before, but had little bits of contact with in various ways. But equestrianism was definitely discussed and I think a strategy mentioned, but I keep banging on about it, so people don't forget and recognise it"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area)

This latter comment shows how the decision-making processes of the policy officers at local-level can influence the extent to which equestrian issues are included in local policy agendas. This indicates that a successful transmission of the interests of equestrians to policy officers has taken place. This may be due to a shared interest in the access agenda unlike a shared symbol (horse) as discussed in relation to intra-industry stakeholders or due to a broader common objective (e.g. minimising illegal accessing activity). Nevertheless, it holds that a pivot point is necessary to begin a dialogue between both interests groups irrespective of their vested interests (Conklin, 2006). Indeed, within the region

(whole of the North East), equestrianism was acknowledged as a hidden activity from the public and council members and the policy officers often argued that more should be done to raise its profile to gain funding:

> "I think we had a couple of meetings regionally and they [authors of Tees Valley Equine Industry Report] presented their findings to One North East and the tourism sector. What they were saying was they needed a regional equine Horse Strategy. There is a strategy aimed at walker's coming to the region or wanting to walk here and cycling, again missing equestrian tourism, but again nothing has ever come of it … at a regional level it does remain largely untapped. It has never really happened here in terms of attracting people to the area as a whole rather, than just little bits of it, Cumbria has done much more. It does get discussed at some meetings where they are working across the Northumberland/Cumbria areas"
>
> (Robert, policy officer – Southern area)

Trying to secure funding to increase participation in riding faced competition from more widely recognised sports:

> "People who have funding would rather people went swimming, so we will provide you with a swimming pool, rather than say a council equestrian centre. I argue it needs recognition and they should recognise it and support it rather than wishing people would play basketball"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern region)

These observations return to the idea of the interests of other complex external groups creating an inter-industry effect on decision-making. The catalyst for change from the officers perspective centres on communication by raising the profile and marketing the unique benefits equestrianism offers. For example, the health benefits and social skills development, particularly for youths "it teaches them responsibility and respect generated by looking after another animal which is reliant on you" (Robert, policy officer - Southern area). Fundamentally then, reducing the complexity caused by inter-industry groups competing for decisions is reduced to one of communication effectiveness and speaking to each other's interests.

In order to support equestrians, funding was sought, which proved difficult in comparison to cyclist and walker provision. Under local transport policy these two groups access requirements were included, but not funding to make routes permissible for equestrians. The policy officers liaised with the Local Access Forum (LAF) to raise awareness in the community of the legal routes and to "get the equestrians to approach the council again so we could at least attempt to get funding and include them in the LT [local transport] policy" (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area). In the Northern area, the policy offers developed a permissible RoW map which addressed all three user groups (cyclists, walkers and equestrians) access requirements:

> "We have tried to address the access issue and where people can and can't ride by producing maps for Tourist Information Centres (TICs) where we have highlighted walking, cycling and equestrian routes and the legal status of the routes. It was well received first time round and has gone for an updated reprint so it will be well received again…It's online in PDF format. There are 44 thousand hard copies going out to Tourist Information Centres (TICs), Bed and Breakfasts and libraries across Tyne and Wear. We have used Northern Print so it goes out through all their outlets. It also goes into the fringe areas such as County Durham and Northumberland remote areas. All of this has come out of a LAF because they identified a need"
>
> (Brad, policy officer – Northern area)

The first edition of the map received commendation from all user groups and drew attention to equestrians' legal routes. At the time of this study, a reprint was in progress and this popular innovation offered a potential solution to engaging 'happy hackers' because of the distribution method adopted through using multiple outlets, again instigated by the front line policy officers. This local-level approach to encourage participation and local policy linked to the Horse Strategy aims and received recognition from Defra; "Defra have picked up on it … Defra emailed me to say a copy had been received and it was great … It hasn't appeared anywhere else but definitely hit the Defra radar" (Brad, policy officer – Northern area).

From this discussion it is proposed that interest transmission across additional stakeholders or groups needs a common language or framework that starts from an overarching point of interest.

5.3.3 Greater engagement with the Horse Strategy

As the previous section demonstrated the local authority policy officers through local-level RoWIP policy are feeding into the first aim of the Horse Strategy in developing partnerships through the LAF with grassroots equestrians. At the time of this study further developments were planned to improve equestrian participation through access projects. "Increasing access has to be done within the region, the bodies, the forestry commission and the police forces" in order to build on the momentum achieved and the policy officers felt there was "no room for complacency" (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area). Progress in this area was underway, "the police and councils are pursuing the use of the existing GIS system to locate riders, this will involve disseminating the postcodes of the routes they have taken" (Brad, policy officer – Northern area). In addition, proposals were currently being drawn together to permit a database that the police controlled with all "RoW information on the system allowing all area officers access to assist a rider in the event of being alone and experiencing an accident" (Trevor, policy officer – Northern area). Despite facilitating equestrian engagement with local-level policy, the policy officers reflected on the consequences of their actions in creating wider access and attempting to include the 'happy hackers', "it is going to put pressure on local authorities in terms of the more people who go out there horse riding, the more routes they are going to want to use, but I think riders should not be excluded because they are less organised than the cyclists and walkers, although it would help us if they were" (Brad, policy officer – Northern area).

In the Southern area, the officers were keen to promote participation and engagement with local-level policy within the various sport related forums to raise equestrianism's profile (DCC and LAF, 2009). In addition, the permissible

route project was to be further extended in "partnership with Natural England to progress a network of multi-user routes with local landowners including incentives such as payment for widening pathways and the installation of gates that can be opened whilst on horseback" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area). And, at the time of writing the proposal to include equestrian issues in council policy was highlighted as "good practice at a RoW management conference" (Robert, policy officer – Southern area). There are clear linkages to the method used in the Northern area with an emphasis on the creation and sustainability of partnerships. As Lucy acknowledged that the "direct approach from the council to open bridleway access, would be less successful than pursuing established links between landowners and Natural England incentives". And, it was envisaged that "closer collaboration between councils" with regard to dissemination of equestrian networks in their respective areas was key to implementing RoWIP which aligned to the Horse Strategy's aims (Robert, policy officer – Southern area). Collaboration was reported between representatives for cycling and equestrianism in response to the opportunity to open safer off-road routes:

> The reps from cycling and the BHS (Access Officer- Volunteer) have produced maps detailing the area from the LAF meetings in South East Northumberland...The long-term objectives involve a 10-year agreement and is aimed at changing the mindset of farmers to open up a whole network of access routes across the North Region which includes equestrians. As we are involving the rural-urban fringe farmers, they are also looking to add more options such as clarifying arable margins and applying for habitat grants from Defra…The emphasis is creating a knowledge base of the land in the North region to meet with Defra's targets. In the past, access was left by the wayside compared to other policy priorities but that has changed and the farmers are targeted by advisors who select an area where access could be opened up and approach the farmer through the stewardship scheme…in this economic climate the money is a real incentive for the farmers to participate"
>
> (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area)

At the same time another significant equestrian tourism project was scheduled to commence, the Pack Pony Trails; "It's in the North Pennines. They have won a huge lottery funded project, part of which is to provide 3 or 4 day long circular

riding routes" (Robert, policy officer – Southern area). The funding award formed part an ongoing physical activity campaign; "Active Durham 2010, but I am not sure it will remain with that title, but, it is a sport partnership with the council" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area). The underpinning idea was to review different sports contributions and for equestrianism this included promoting the Pack Pony Trails, "the idea is to link health, group activity, the environment and sport" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area). As the "Active" title suggests the project is about encouraging participation *per se* in any sport, while taking advantage of the opportunity to "do a celebration event of the Pack Pony Trails, to try and raise the profile in the form of a bigger equestrian event in the county" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area). At the time of writing no firm plans were in place "we can't say we will be definitely doing that, but that is what we are looking at and in that project, equestrian activities have been included … I would like to see that actually happen on the ground" (Lucy, policy officer – Southern area).

From this discussion it can be reasoned that collaboration can be used as a means to reduce complexity caused by differences between and among different stakeholders groups. This can then provide a basis to reduce the power of vested interests and enhance the basis for common goals (Geyer and Rihani, 2010).

5.3.4 Insights for participation and policy engagement

From the evidence suggested by the policy officers, work is required to raise the profile of equestrianism across the regions to increase participation. Adequate communication networks to reach 'happy hackers', equine organisations and grassroots riding centres need to be established. In order to secure funding to improve off-road riding access the local authority policy officers have begun to collaborate and gather evidence to convince their managers and councillors of equestrian requirements. Boxes 5.3 and 5.4 illustrate the main insights the policy officers provided to assist their role in increasing participation and engaging equestrians with the Horse Strategy as part of RoWIP policy.

Box 5.3 Critical insight into barriers to increasing participation in equestrianism

- Elitist label associated with equestrianism created internal and external discrimination impeding on securing specific equine policies and financial resources directed towards assisting horse-world.
- Public funding cuts have increased difficulties in this area.
- Frustration with internal procedures restricting research into participation in riding and the benefits of riding which could form part of sport, leisure and tourism policy.
- Lack of acknowledgement of riding as a "sport", leisure activity and levels of participation in the region.
- Lack of communication network with equestrians – restricted to "proactive" BHS members.
- Lack of registers of riding centres and livery yards (either affiliated or unaffiliated).
- Lack of knowledge of horse-world (local reports commenced in 2003)
- Problems with non-members or "happy hacker" riders – they reside outside of equestrian networks and ride across private land causing problems with "rights of way" policy. No means of communicating with this group.

Box 5.4 Critical insight into improving engagement with the Horse Strategy

- Industry to ensure that regional representatives collaborate with local authority policy officers to implement initiatives to benefit equestrianism
- Industry support to communicate with "happy hackers"
- Regulation of livery yards – acquire access prior to establishing business
- Produce maps of legal rights of way and distribute through local outlets to reach the "happy hackers" nationally.
- Encourage equestrians to record traffic incidents to provide data for funding bids
- The industry should oversee the registration of riding centres and livery yards
- Market the benefits of riding as a sport and leisure activity

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the perspectives and insights of i) regional representatives of equine organisations and ii) local authority policy officers. The influence of the decision-making processes and role the regional representatives of equine organisations and local authority policy officers play were considered. What becomes clear is the lack of collaboration and communication networks between the regional representatives of equine

organisations, local authority policy officers and grassroots equestrians which hinders the implementation of the Horse Strategy at local-level. Although there were initial signs of progress moving towards increased collaboration between the two parties, the extent to which collaboration occurs is largely mediated by personal decision-making processes of these individuals and the constraints on resources attached to each respective role. On the one hand, regional representatives of equine organisations are expected to collaborate despite being direct competitors in equestrian membership and qualification schemes. And, on the other hand, limited resources across a wide geographic area constrain the ability of one paid employee to create and maintain efficient communication networks across a diverse set of social actors (grassroots equestrians, BHS volunteers, proprietors, BHS instructors, ABRS, WHW, RSPCA and policy officers).

In theoretical terms, while considerable intra- and inter-industry complexity exists, solutions may be found from common symbols (intra-industry; the horse) or common interest points (inter-industry; off-road access). Vested interests and the structuring of power only serve to exacerbate differences between stakeholders and magnify the effects of structural constraints on particular groups (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , North, 1995). When expanded beyond the horse-world/industry, the challenge then becomes one of addressing the vested interests of groups in direct competition with grassroots equestrians for local resources and decisions (e.g. access rights). Co-opted allies (e.g. policy officers in this instance) become street-level bureaucrats in their own right, capable of affecting strategy implementation (Lipsky, 1980).

In the following chapter I move on to consider the perspective and experience of grassroots equestrians.

6. Findings and Discussion: Grassroots Equestrianism

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I analysed the perspective and insights of the regional representatives of equine organisations and local authority policy officers. This chapter starts by describing the business issues, tensions and barriers facing each riding centre which affects their ability to i) increase participation in equestrianism and ii) engage grassroots stakeholders with the aims of the Horse Strategy to transform the horse-world into a more fully-developed Horse-Industry (sections 6.2-6.5). I then analyse the perspective and insights from grassroots proprietors, staff and riders with reference to the literature and the four research questions:

1. What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?
2. What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?
3. To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?
4. How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

I conclude the chapter by summarising these insights, connecting them to theory and literature on participation, complexity, wicked problems and structural interests and discuss the implications for implementing the Horse Strategy.

6.2 Site 1 Equus Urban Riding Centre: Background

Equus formed part of a wider urban 'City Farm' project until 1999, when the riding centre 'spun-out' and acquired independent charitable status. This was in direct response to the success of several funded projects. The project model is based upon adopting the "Hippotherapy" approach (Bliss, 1997 , Lessick *et al.*, 2004). Therapeutic benefits are linked to human-horse interaction as a method to encourage social participation within identified disadvantaged local adult and youth groups. Originally operating with one outdoor arena, Sport England funding was secured to construct a central indoor facility which became operational in 2002. Equus is unique to this study as it operates as both a charity and commercial riding centre and is one of a small number of Inner City Community Horse Projects in the country. In 2003, Equus received a Queens

Award in recognition of its "excellent work" towards benefiting the social welfare of the local community.

In the industry context, Equus is an approved centre with both equine organisations; BHS and ABRS. This allows the centre to provide a flexible range of qualifications and training that reflects the specific skills and capabilities of their participants. Equus delivers over 30,000 lessons and equestrian sessions per annum, taught by BHS qualified instructors. In contrast to the other sites, Equus' staff is divided into two teams focusing on business and horse management tasks respectively. The centre manager leads the business team to maintain the financial welfare of the centre, liaising with funding bodies and marketing the centre. Two trained social workers are employed to liaise with relevant services, schools and teachers, providing tailored projects for pupils with behavioural difficulties.

The horse management (yard team) composes of one full-time manager, two full-time staff, four instructors also providing yard cover, two trainee instructors and a plethora of volunteers (see Table 6.1 below). This latter group is a broad cross-section of participants ranging from disadvantaged cohorts to commercial paying customers (children, youths, and adults).

Table 6.1: Equus team structure

Business Management Team:

Kathryn (37)	Centre Manager, Business Administration Degree, BHS Stage II Instructor, employed for 10 years (full-time)
Trudy (44)	Assistant Manager/Instructor, Business Administration NVQ level 4, BHS Stage II, employed for 6 years (full-time)
Roger (46)	Volunteer and projects co-ordinator, Social Work Degree, employed for 4 years (full-time)
Claudia (41)	Volunteer and projects co-ordinator, Social Work Degree, BHS Stage II Instructor, employed for 5.5 years (full-time)

Zara (22)	Administrator, employed for 2 years (full-time)
Lily (54)	Administrative assistant, employed for 3 years (part-time)
Petra (57)	Administrative assistant, employed for 4 years (part-time)

Horse Management Team:

Kay (39)	Yard Manager/instructor, BHS Advanced Instructor (AI), employed for 4 years (full-time)
Abbey (19)	Groom/instructor, BHS Stage I (studying for Stage II), employed for 1.5 years (full-time)
Louise (18)	Groom/instructor, BHS Stage II, employed for 2.5 years (full-time)
Nicole (38)	Instructor/BHS Field Access Officer, BHS AI, employed for 1.5 years (part-time)
Kendra (33)	Instructor, BHS Stage II, employed for 2 years (part-time)
Eva (35)	Instructor, BHS Stage III, employed for 5 years (part-time)
Melody (23)	Instructor, BHS Stage II, employed for 3 years (part-time)
Giselle (18)	Trainee Groom/Instructor, studying for NVQ I/II in Horse Management and BHS Stage I, employed for 8 months (part-time)
Jadyn (17)	Trainee Groom/Instructor, studying for NVQ I/II in Horse Management and BHS Stage I, employed for 1 year (part-time)

6.2.1 The business approach

The centre manager described Equus as a "social enterprise" combining the desire to create on the one hand, a social equine "community" and on the other hand, generate funding and commercial income streams to make the centre self-sufficient. In stark contrast to the other riding centres Equus followed a specific business model:

> "Every member of staff has targets and objectives and they have to meet them…We provide support, but the hard facts are that everything has to make money…we are like Asda or something, "you haven't performed here, or this is down". There are distinct targets which have to be met and tracked to keep the

> business going. We have to do this, if we didn't keep track we would not survive"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

The balance between profit, loss and potential closure are an omnipresent concern for all staff and they worked collectively to avoid this outcome. Despite implementing business strategies, targets and taking opportunities to market the centre locally (staff appeared on local radio, participated in local festivals and council promotions of the City) there were insufficient reserves from funding and commercial revenues to cover charitable and reinvestment costs. Equus is in a state of financial loss.

6.2.2 Organisational structure

The staffing structure depicted in Table 6.1 above, is supplemented by a network of associates forming a Board of Trustees. The Board's function is to offer voluntary mentoring and advice based on their professional backgrounds ranging from general practitioners to lawyers based on the core values of the centre:

> "[c]ommunity involvement and social inclusion, which are achieved through the provision of a broad range of participatory training and educational opportunities"
>
> (Equus Business Plan, 2007: 5)

The Board liaises with the centre manager and participate in sub-group working committees that seek to improve the centre, facilities and range of provision. The Board reports back to funding bodies as means of legitimatisation, control and monitoring over the justifiable appropriation of funds. Equus seeks to create a form of social capital by investing in the "trust, norms and networks" which have developed internally and externally to the centre (Putnam, 1993: 169), for example, instigating a "stakeholder" survey involving the teams, instructors, volunteers and as many participants and parents as possible highlighting "what was working well and what was not" within Equus (Price, 2009). Feedback from the survey output was presented to key stakeholders (including Board members)

via an away day. The stated objective of Equus is continuous improvement of the stakeholder equine experience within the centre and the identification of future development opportunities and funds, and to direct the management team towards these goals.

6.2.3 Levels system

The levels system is a unique feature and in Equus' operational model departs from traditional equestrian terminology associated with descriptions of riding categories; novice, intermediate and advanced abilities. The levels system was introduced to provide a benchmark for participants in relation to riding proficiency. It is also a means to encourage participation, the levels give "the opportunity to see themselves [participants] progress a bit quicker and that helps them to keep riding, I think. Otherwise, it can take years to break out of being called a 'novice' rider" (Fieldnotes, Eva, Instructor: Equus). Despite this belief, evidence to the contrary emerged when speaking to participants, the levels and traditional categories are used interchangeably or together. For instance, several participants constantly referred to themselves as "novice level three's" (Field notes: Equus). Similarly, in the internal 'stakeholder' survey only 50% of Equus respondents were confident in defining how the level of categorisation worked and what constituted sufficient skill acquisition in order to progress to the next level (Price, 2009: 5). This would suggest that in trying to adopt the levels system to incentivise participation, the outcome is converse and participants refer back to the established horse-world categories (novice, intermediate and advanced). Thus, the participants, once introduced to the horse-world, may seek a sense of connection and "place" through the adoption of the accepted terminology (Latimer and Birke, 2009).

Participants are likely to try to legitimise themselves in the broader community of equestrians as doing so anchors their place within this community. This is a reflection of their interests but also a reflection of a desire for identity and peer relevance. From the perspective of the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b), these individuals appear to be grounding themselves in the "community"

setting and this represents a means by which equine organisations might begin the process of leveraging these individuals towards broader engagement with the Horse Strategy. In chapter five, I argued that common interest may be found in the symbolic nature of the horse. In this instance, it seems that another pathway to participation may come from common identity. These observations build on the work of Latimer and Birke (2009) about individuals grounding their place in the 'horsey' community by mimicing established practices, using horse-world language, and adhering to community norms.

6.2.4 Participant experience

Taking the notions of identity and place forward, this section presents two diverse Equus participants and outlines their experience in equestrianism. The aim here is to provide an insight into the range of Equus participants. First, I present Alicia, a novice (or level 2) adult participant and describes the determinant factors which influenced her participation in equestrianism.

Box 6.1: "Alicia" - Adult rider (novice, level 2)

Alicia (37) began riding to share her daughter's (Katie, aged 9) hobby and as Katie would like to own a pony, Alicia felt that being able to ride herself and have "more knowledge" about equestrianism would assist in caring for the pony (Diary sheet, Alicia: Equus). Initially, Alicia began riding in one group lesson per week. However, this quickly increased to two lessons and joining the Adult Riding Club which combines a lesson and horse management tuition (working towards BHS Stage I accreditation). In addition, encouraged by staff and her instructor, Alicia began volunteering on the yard, which benefited her as she describes, "I'm learning so much, it is fantastic! It is a great opportunity to work with some very experienced and highly qualified staff" (Diary sheet, Alicia: Equus). Finally, after becoming more involved with the Equus "community" Alicia also opted to become a member of a "sub-group," (committee – see above) to enhance her participation at Equus. Alicia summarised how riding has changed her life over the past eighteen months as follows, "I can't believe the effect Equus has had on me, I am now riding, competing in local friendly competitions, and volunteering for yard duties. I would say I am addicted; my husband has become a 'horse widow'" (Diary sheet, Alicia: Equus).

Alicia's example reflects Kay's (2004) argument that the family is a factor determining participation missing from current research exploring why people participate. What is clear is the combined influence of "children" (Kay, 2004) in the "household" (Downward, 2007) and "life-style shift" events (Sport England., 2005) which influences the level and frequency of Alicia's participation. It is important to note that Alicia does not work and this creates a potential resource to enable riding that others may not necessarily possess. For the most part, the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) does not account for resource availability as a determination of participation and may represent a distinct oversight. The model accounts for time pressures but little else. Without time and financial resources, the degree of participation and ability to participate is likely to change and thus the implementation of the Horse Strategy. In a broader

sense then, equine organisations as well as riding centres must look further into individual willingness and ability to engage and to the extent of engagement.

As a second example, Gareth is a complete beginner (novice or level 1, see Box 6.2). His participation occurred because of a social project aimed at local school pupils with anti-social behaviour problems (see Appendix XXIV for background details).

Box 6.2: "Gareth" – "Gallop to Learn" Social project (Hippotherapy) rider (novice, level 1)

Prior to attending the Gallop to Learn (G2L) course at Equus, Gareth had never been in contact with a horse. The project aims to address personal, social and educational needs of individuals, using the care of horses as a medium to provide purpose, structure, and routine where it may not have previously existed. It is also a powerful antidote to anti-social behaviour, crime and exclusion (adapted from Equus Business Plan, 2007: 5). Gareth attended as part of a group of pupils from a local school (aged 11-16) who were identified as disruptive in the class environment. At the start of the course Gareth instigated "pushing and shoving" behaviour whenever the group congregated, he swore, demanded cigarette breaks and complained about "the smell" of manure at Equus (Field notes, Gareth G2L: Equus). Over the duration of the course (6 weeks), Gareth's behaviour gradually began to change:

> Gareth is quieter and focused on bringing the head collar to Louise [instructor]…He is standing still listening to her instructions and not shoving the other boys, so they follow his lead and pay attention, there are signs of progress in their attitude from the first disruptive session.
>
> (Field notes, Gareth, G2L: Equus)

These small alterations in Gareth's behaviour continued as he became more involved in horse management tasks and the riding lessons. His teacher, Steph commented on the change in Gareth and added, "the group have started a section on the school website dedicated to the care of horses, as they have enjoyed it [the course] so much" (Field notes, Steph, G2L: Equus).

This extends our initial observations on motivation to participate in equestrianism because it transcends observable motivations and raises questions about unobservable or latent motives. The individual voluntarily engaged with the programme as a means to enrich his education but not for any interest in horses. It should be noted that over time as Gareth engaged with horses, it became apparent that his motivation for more involved participation increasingly stemmed from the symbolic nature of the horse, which attests to the findings from chapter five that participation can be leveraged through this symbol.

6. 3 Site 2 Hengst Riding Centre: Background

Hengst is a family-owned, British Horse Society (BHS) approved centre and has been established for over 25 years. Located on the "rural-urban fringe,"(boundary between rural and urban land usage—housing and agricultural) defined as houses border the paddock on one side, the entrance opens onto a main road providing public transportation links and the remaining borders are open fields (Murdoch *et al.*, 2003). Hengst is set in 100 acres of land and comprises two different business ventures run by the same family: equestrian (riding centre, equine feed and tack shop, livery provision) and an on-site hotel. The equestrian aspect currently has the capacity to house up to 100 horses (approximately 25 school horses and 75 private liveries), an indoor arena (50m x 30m) with a café and viewing gallery (housing the tack shop), outdoor arena (40m x 30m), cross-country course and several grazing pastures. The number of horses fluctuates due to livery turnover and horse trading practices (buying and selling of horses). In the last 18 months, the hotel has undergone substantial refurbishment and investment resulting in an upgrade to four-star accommodation status including 15 ensuite bedrooms and 2 function rooms. This includes creating a small area with sheep, alpacas, pigs and donkeys to further attract visitors. There is also an organic herb and vegetable garden, a trout-fishing facility, quad-bikes, clay-pigeon shooting and golf facilities. The aim as Claire (proprietor) explained is to "appeal under travel and tourism angles,

encourage families to come here for activity weekends" which includes horse riding (Claire, proprietor: Hengst). Approximately 70% of business revenue is generated by the hotel. Hengst has an easily accessible, comprehensive website detailing all the available facilities, events and activities available on site.

6.3.1 The business approach

Hengst's equestrian business experienced notable changes after the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001. Claire explained the impact on the business:

> "Farmers have been subsidised to take in liveries undercutting the yard. The farms don't come under the strict health and safety guidelines imposed on the yard to stay in business. This means that children can take their horses there at half the cost and spend all day at the farm. To comply with standards we would have to charge a small fee for children to stay on the yard following their lessons and have to make sure standards are adhered to"[22]
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

Claire responded to the threat of external 'undercutting' by implementing a strategic plan to consolidate the different aspects of the business commencing with the refurbishment of the hotel:

> "The businesses were in the past separate and the liveries didn't patronise the hotel at all…merging of the two makes commercial sense. Previously there was no planning or vision. The 'garage' [stabling] should have been pulled down years ago with its leaking roof and so on, but do you replace that with new stabling that will not give you a decent return or do you build holiday lets? So we will probably scale down the riding centre side of things, keep the livery yard running as that makes sense, but reduce the amount of 'dead money' invested in the riding centre"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

This example suggests that the hotel and livery aspects of the business are commercially viable ventures. Future developments may include the closure of the riding centre, demonstrating Claire's awareness of business trends and profitability levels. The Horse Strategy cited a lack of business acumen as a

[22] Refers to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, regarding safe working practices for children under the age of 14.

probable cause of inefficient equine businesses (BHIC, 2005: 44). Despite Claire's business skills, the riding centre continues to produce negligible profit margins compounded as Claire describes by "the usual things, overheads, rising prices and local competition from livery yards" (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst). At the outset of this study, Hengst also included a 'sister' riding centre located further north on rented property. Midway through the study, both horses and Shannon (Yard Manager) returned to Hengst. When I asked Shannon about the withdrawal she replied, "nobody knew we were there and despite my efforts to promote in the area, nobody seemed to be riding" (Field notes, Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst). This suggests possible issues surrounding supply and demand for riding in the more northerly rural location. Shannon added, "it didn't help with the new livery yards opening up and being near the [local equine] college" (Field notes, Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst). The combination of a remote location, lack of public awareness of the centre and competition from rival equine businesses impacted on the success of the sister venture.

There is the potential for a business acumen problem here (Bacon, 2005, 2009) as the location decision seems more of convenience than strategically thought through. Generally, it is recognised that fundamental challenges to business owners stem from either a lack of entrepreneurial capacity to identify ways to grow the firm or a lack of managerial capacity to effectively manage growth, or both (Barringer and Ireland, 2012). This is a problem specifically acknowledged in the horse industry (Bacon, 2005, 2009). These resource constraints go beyond financial ones discussed in chapter five in relation to engagement among equine organisations and grassroots equestrians. In this instance, the nature of the resource constraints are more intangible in nature and time-consuming to develop which inevitably creates implementation delays not just deficits. These are supply-side constraints which compound demand-side and structural constraints that affect access to riding opportunities (Elson, 2004).

6.3.2 Staffing Structure

Hengst remains financially viable because as Claire states, "the family works in the business, if it weren't for them, the business would probably not continue" (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst). The proprietors (Claire and husband) manage the Hotel, whilst the two eldest daughters Tess (18) and Amy (16) undertake a dual staffing role; within the riding centre and hotel. For the equine business, three further full-time staff are employed. Table 6.2 details their roles, age, qualifications and time employed.

Table 6.2: Hengst team structure

Shannon (28)	Yard Manager/instructor, BHS Stage III, employed for 9 years
Charlotte (18)	Groom/instructor, BHS Stage II, employed for 2 years
Joe (45)	Manager of the tack and feed store, BHS Stage I, employed for > 15 years
Tess (18)	Groom/instructor, BHS Stage II, employed for 2 years
Amy (16)	Groom (recently left school), employed for 1 month

Note: Charlotte, Tess and Shannon perform the majority of tuition, whilst all members of staff perform administrative duties; answering queries, marketing, taking bookings, fees and serving refreshments in the café.

In addition, part-time free-lance BHS qualified instructors work on selected evenings, weekends and holiday periods including the BHSAI qualified instructor. At the outset of the study a 'handyman' was also employed to assist with generic yard duties, however, he left "without warning," after a short period of time (Field notes, Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst). The turn-over of staff, Claire explained was a recurrent problem for Hengst:

> "Staff is really difficult to retain usually they are 'home grown' we rarely have staff that stay who are 'outsiders' [employed from different riding centres] and I suspect that is true of many riding centres…As with the hotel work…being a riding instructor is not portrayed as a 'good' job in society and therefore it's got

> the label of a low level working class occupation and in today's society it's hard to find and retain the people you need to keep things running"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

This passage reflects the recognition within the Horse Strategy of the difficulty in attracting and retaining, qualified and dedicated staff within the riding centre environment. Moreover, this section highlights Hengst's reliance on family and 'home grown' staff to maintain the businesses. For instance Joe, Shannon and Charlotte were all participants prior to becoming employees in the riding centre. From a resource constraint perspective, this speaks to a "human capital" (Becker, 1975) issue in that sufficiently capable staff are largely unavailable developing mainly from former participants. This creates further constraints on supply but is matched by an inability to quickly source solutions to the resource deficit.

6.3.3 Participant experience

The first profile is a family of riders, selected to highlight how participation can become a collective shared interest. In addition, the family quickly proceeded to purchase their own horse. The second profile is Adele, a young rider within Hengst's "target participant market" aged 5-15 (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst). This rider was chosen to exemplify the experience that the majority receive as regular participants at Hengst.

Box 6.3: Family activity

The inspiration for the family to become involved with equestrianism stemmed from Lisa (daughter, 9). The family home is situated close to grazing pastures, which led to Lisa interacting with horses and "an affinity with horses" ensued, she explained (Field notes, Lisa: Hengst). Less than a year ago, Lisa's interest grew, resulting in commencing riding lessons at Hengst, stimulating her parents James (42) and Tracy (40) to follow suit. At the outset of this study, the family's level of participation progressed with the purchase of "Lady," a four year-old novice 15.2hh bay mare (female dark brown horse), from Hengst. As both horse and riders were "novices," James and Tracy decided to keep Lady stabled at Hengst until they "had more knowledge about looking after her…then we will probably move her closer to home as it will be easier to care for her and reduce the costs" (Field notes, James: Hengst). Despite the cost of livery, this extract shows that the welfare of the horse is given priority until the family have sufficient understanding to care for their horse alone. Following the purchase of Lady, the family's attendance at the centre increased to several times a week. Three months after purchasing Lady, James decided to "place a deposit on Theo" (a large 16.3hh male horse) providing James with his own horse to ride (Field notes, James: Hengst).

Box 6.4: Young enthusiast

Adele's (9) motivation for equestrianism stemmed from two sources as she described, "I love all animals and my Auntie's interested in horses, so she bought me some lessons," from the initial lessons her enthusiasm has continued to grow (Field notes, Adele: Hengst). Originally participating in group lessons, Adele described her reasons for seeking private tuition: "I fell off a few times and this made me lose my confidence, Tess [instructor] helped me get it back and I like being taught alone" (Field notes, Adele: Hengst). Over the past year Adele has also joined Hengst's Pony Club (not affiliated to the representative body, The Pony Club). This group compliments riding lessons with learning horse management skills through a series of practical and lecture sessions. Adele's mother divulged the following: "the cost of the private lessons is more than the group, but her skills are progressing quite quickly…I'm not "horsey" but I can see changes, especially in her confidence, so it's worth it" (Field notes, Adele's mother: Hengst).

As in the previous case, "home" (Sport England., 2004b), "family" (Kay, 2004) and "household" (Downward and Riordan, 2007) again emerge as key determinants of participation. In addition, 'cost' implications relative to household "income" is a determinant (Downward, 2007 , Downward and Riordan, 2007). However, the opportunity cost of participation is offset by the participant's passion for riding. What was also observed in this instance was a snowballing or synergistic effect whereby one family member's participation triggered a trickledown effect of additional participation in equestrianism by subsequent members.

6.4 Site 3 Fohlen Equestrian Centre: Background

Fohlen, established for over thirty years is privately-owned and situated within 220 acres of rural land. Fohlen incorporates four aspects of equine-related business; equestrian centre, livery, breeding and riding holidays, plus a bed/breakfast venture in the 18th century country house for the two latter tourist businesses. The land at Fohlen is organically farmed making the centre virtually self-sufficient for hay/haylage supplies, an example of using Fohlen's resources to reduce overhead costs. Fohlen adopts energy saving practices in reducing and recycling waste; manure becomes a fertiliser, rubber bedding mats in the stables reduce the amount of waste, rain water collected in butts is used for general tasks, such as watering the indoor arena surface, finally signs are displayed to conserve both electricity and water usage. External products such as feed supplies and shavings to cover the matting are organically sourced. The equestrian facilities include stabling for 50 horses, an adjoining indoor arena (42m x 20m) with viewing area, a floodlit "all-weather" outdoor arena (64m x 24m), reception/office attached to the main house, three British Eventing (BE) standard Cross Country courses and show jumps. Bi-annually the centre hosts BE national competitions (April and September) emanating from Fiona's (proprietor) previous competitive interests, and participation. Furthermore, Fiona continues to breed and trade in event horses. Fohlen is a BHS approved

centre and a regional BHS Riding and Road Safety training and examination site. In addition, other courses include BHS Stage examination training and comprehensive horse care instruction for participants and resident liveries. Access is predominantly by car because the public transport service terminates at the nearest village, creating a 2-mile walk to the centre. Fohlen's website provides detailed information regarding all aspects of facilities, holidays, price guidelines, and tuition available.

6.4.1 Business approach

Fohlen like Hengst is a commercial equestrian centre, the daily management of the yard is predominately Scarlet's (Head Girl) responsibility with Fiona retaining direct control over financial and business decisions:

> "The issues which greatly concern me are the insurance premiums and liability implications, when groups hack outside the confines of the farm and a rider falls off then I become immediately liable. This has caused several centres to close and as a result we have benefited from increased business. However, this brings its own difficulties as parents expect their child to be accommodated when it suits them, rather than within the opening hours, which have been extended to 7pm in order to cope with demand. If you require further information speak to the girls, they deal with the daily issues"
>
> (Fiona, Proprietor: Fohlen)

This extract highlights the current concern for all riding centres after becoming directly liable for riding injuries even when they have not been negligent in their safety procedures. This followed the ruling in the 2003 Mirvahedy vs. Henley court case.[23] Fiona unequivocally states that the business protocols are implemented based on her decisions and preferred procedures rather than parental expectations, irrespective of the impact on profits. As directed, I spoke to Deborah, who commented on the ethos of the business:

> "It's a pretty tight ship here, Fiona is rarely seen on the yard, but she doesn't miss a trick…she intuitively knows if there's an incident with a horse or people are not treating horses with respect…she won't have it, she's a stickler on

[23] This case found the owners of an escaped horse liable for injuries sustained by the plaintive even though they had not been negligent under Section 2 of the 1971 Animals Act. The debate continues (see www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses/topics/insurance.htm).

> that…she cares deeply for the horses" welfare, we all do. I sometimes think she prefers 4-legged friends to 2-legged humans!"
>
> (Field notes, Deborah, Yard Manager: Fohlen)

Scarlet, continued to explain some of the centre's expectations from participants:

> "I've been here for 17 years and there's not much that gets past me…IF children are allowed to become a livery on the yard they have to abide by the rules and that includes no loud noise or unruly behaviour. Children under the age of 17 must be accompanied by an adult…horses must be treated with respect, otherwise that person will be asked to leave"
>
> (Field notes, Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen)

From these examples, it is evident that although Fohlen is a commercial centre, horse welfare and providing a monitored and managed equestrian environment is Fiona and her team's priority rather the generation of profit. Children are catered for at the centre, but there is a preference for adult riders and liveries reflected in Scarlet's emphasis on 'IF' children are allowed on the yard, they must follow Fiona's rules. Moreover, to enhance the quality of the school horses and participation of the rider, Fohlen practised a unique procedure, as Deborah revealed:

> "All the horses are schooled by us for a year before they go into the school, that way they know the job expected, we know them and we have very few unexpected instances or accidents. We get a lot of rider's coming from other yards where they have been terrified by the horses and they remark about how well behaved ours are…Most of the time, we run well"
>
> (Field notes, Deborah, Yard Manager: Fohlen)

Fohlen has two advantages over the other riding centres by adopting this procedure. First, it allows the team to understand each horse's characteristics, match riding ability with a suitable horse and prevent accidents. Second, Fiona writes off the cost of schooling a horse for a year, which other centres are unable to sustain. Because of this approach and the financial implications, I asked Scarlet about the current and predicted future of the centre. She responded as follows:

> "I would say we are downsizing rather than expanding. I would find it hard to imagine that this riding school will exist in 5 years time…I still think it will be wound down, especially if the current money factors keep happening…It will go back to the older times, only people who are rich will be owners, like Fiona 'old money' will own and the rest will struggle"
>
> (Field notes, Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen)

As Scarlet has managed Fohlen for seventeen years she is in a good position to evaluate the fluctuations in the centre's trade and recognised that the economic climate posed a significant barrier to participation. This is echoed in the analogy between the older and modern era of ownership, predicting that wealth will again dictate horse ownership based on experience of the horse-world. Scarlet added, "entries for the BE events are also down, but we have had to cancel the last two times due to the weather and it looks unlikely for this September either" (Field notes, Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen). Similar to Hengst, the future of equestrian participation at Fohlen remained uncertain.

This site raises issues of how resources are ethically allocated but also speaks to the symbolism of the horse.

6.4.2 Staffing structure

Table 6.3 shows the team employed at Fohlen included seven full-time staff and two part-time staff, including their roles, age, qualifications and time employed. Working at Fohlen, is described by Mark (handyman) as follows:

> "The good thing here is everybody works as a team. If everybody stuck to their own little bit it wouldn't work everybody helps with everything…It's great up here, a true team, relaxed and yes we have the odd fall out, but most of the time it runs smoothly"
>
> (Field notes, Mark: Fohlen)

Table 6.3: Fohlen team structure

Full-time:

Scarlet (42)	Head Girl BHS Stage IV, employed for 17 years
Deborah (29)	Yard Manager, BHS Stage II, employed for 10 years
Mark (65)	"Handyman" retired farmer, employed for 5 years
Jenny (24)	Instructor/groom, BHS Stage II, employed for 3 years
Kim (22)	Instructor/groom, BHS Stage I, employed for 2 years
Min (18)	Groom, studying for BHS Stage I, employed for 1 year
Mary (46)	Instructor/administrator, BHS Stage II, employed for 8 years

Part-time:

Gill (38)	Horse trainer (former competitive groom for Fiona, before embarking upon a family), employed over a period of 20 years (including family break)
Gillian (26)	Instructor (relief cover), BHS Stage II (previously full-time staff, now a full-time secondary school teacher), employed for 6 years

The team approach described above led to the stable areas and yard being clear of debris, horses are clean, tacked and ready for participant's lessons. Lessons usually ran according to schedule. Staff retention does not appear to be an issue at Fohlen. When asked Deborah why she thought staff remained at the same centre, she replied:

> "It's ok, everybody whinges from time to time, but I like Fiona, she's quirky enough to be funny…but to stay here, well the team is good and everybody works together, better than some really bad yards I've been on over the years... no real back-biting which is great"
>
> (Field notes, Deborah: Fohlen)

This extract infers that the combination of team dynamics and routines focused on efficiency and horse welfare creates an environment where staff are content

to stay and not seek alternative employment. In light of the previously discussed "human capital" (Becker, 1975) constraints facing riding centres this further implies the importance of the symbolic nature of the horse and extends it to the notion of ethical behaviour. In this instance, the ethos of welfare and the primacy of horse welfare are demonstrative of a common interest platform among the proprietors and their staff. In turn, it is likely that this common interest and ethos filters through to grassroots equestrians and additional stakeholders (spectators e.g., parents, family members, etc.) which creates a virtuous circle for increasing participation.

6.4.3 Participants experience

In boxes 6.5 and 6.6 two participants from Fohlen describe their reasons for participation and experience at Fohlen. The first is Penny, a livery who is aiming to regain her confidence in riding after sustaining serious injury. The second, Liz an adult rider, represents the main group of Fohlen's participants (female, white, aged ≥ 35 with disposable income).

Box 6.5: Experienced adult rider

Penny (46) started riding after her daughter, Avril (19), began taking riding lessons thirteen years ago. Penny enjoyed riding and purchased her first horse after six years lessons at Fohlen, "I got into dressage in a big way and rode in the local shows, I had another horse before Red, called Aragon and we did a lot of competitions together" (Field notes, Penny, livery: Fohlen). However, Penny's attitude towards riding changed abruptly two years ago:

> "I was very confident in all aspects of riding, until I fell and broke both wrists [off Aragon] then after recovering, I was jumping Aragon and Tinkerbell [school horse] was being ridden by another girl on the lesson. I just came over the fences and Tinkerbell was stood at the opposite side of the school… she took a flying leap at Aragon, rushed towards him, teeth bared, ears back, mouth open. So Aragon, veered off to the side and I bailed out the side…I hung onto the reins, Aragon flung his head up and that was the end for my shoulder, boy, that really hurt I heard the rip as it popped out of the joint"
>
> (Field notes, Penny, livery: Fohlen)

Two serious accidents in a short space of time affected Penny's confidence "I am now very nervous and will only do flat work" (Field notes, Penny, livery: Fohlen). Penny sold Aragon, but despite her negative experiences purchased Red, a large 18hh horse to, as she described, "reduce my fear of it [accident] happening again…I really love horses and I am determined to get back into dressage" (Field notes, Penny, livery: Fohlen). Following this discussion with Penny she agreed to keep diary sheets to record her progress and commented "it might help me in some ways to see where I've come from and how I'm progressing as time passes" (Field notes, Penny, livery: Fohlen).

Box 6.6: Intermediate adult

Liz (52) professed that her interest in riding stemmed back to her childhood, "I had always wanted to ride as a child, but my family couldn't afford it. Now it has become a bit more affordable, I decided to take my daughter riding when on holiday and joined in myself!" (Diary sheet, Liz: Fohlen). Liz has been riding at Fohlen for 5 years, her choice was influenced by the following factors, "I was very fed up with our previous riding school and looked around for another, a friend at work suggested I try Fohlen, so I checked it out on the BHS website, came here and the rest is history as they say" (Diary sheet, Liz: Fohlen). Initially Liz rode on the group lesson but decided to also have private lessons, "I didn't feel my riding was progressing and I asked Jenny [instructor] what she recommended, I started the private lessons with Scarlet and I think they have made a massive difference as the instruction is all about you and your horse" (Diary sheet, Liz: Fohlen). Similar to Adele's experience at Hengst, Liz perceived the one-to-one attention in private lessons to be beneficial to increasing "riding ability" and "bond with a horse" (Diary sheet, Liz: Fohlen). Liz also regularly takes part in Fohlen's unaffiliated competitions to, as she states, "give you a challenge and something to aim for" (Diary sheet, Liz: Fohlen).

Both case examples suggest the role of a family determinant in participation but are also indicative of an important cognitive dimension in the form of 'passion'. Despite several injuries Penny continually returned to riding and Liz's expressions of increasing excitement in her statements echo that as experience and participation grows, a strong bond or 'hook' may then emerge with the horse, which furthers its symbolic nature (Atwood-Lawrence, 1985 , Clutton-Brock, 1992).

6.5 Site 4 Cavallo: Background

Cavallo is a non-approved (or unaffiliated) riding centre owned by Isla which has been established in the local area for over 20 years based on local networks with farmers and the hunting fraternity. Eight years ago, the business transferred to a larger facility in response to increased demand for riding lessons. The centre is now situated on a large rural farm. The stables cater for 50 horses and 22 acres of grazing land are rented under agreement from the farmer, who keeps his horse on the yard. The equestrian facilities include an 'all-weather' (60m x 30m) outdoor, a small (25m x 15m) indoor school and a cross-country course where lessons and bi-monthly competitions are held. Cavallo is licensed to operate through annual council and veterinary inspections to ensure the health and safety of participants and the welfare of horses are being maintained. Cavallo does not have a website.

6.5.1 Business approach

Isla has over fifty years' experience of working in the horse-world. The yard reflects the owners approach to equestrianism, as Isla pointed out:

> "I run things around here [yard] as I like them, 'relaxed'. It's one of the reasons I've never sought to be approved by the BHS or any other organisation I suppose, because I have my own rules of treating the horse right and enjoying the riding"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

This example provides an insight into the focus of the business; to provide an environment where the horse and rider interact and 'enjoy' equestrianism in a relaxed but knowledgeable atmosphere. Trish, a livery for eight years described her experience of Cavallo:

> "At most BHS yards your horse is tacked and brought to you, you were not allowed to have any contact with the horse…you were not allowed in the stable with the horse to un-tack…I have noticed here that it is 'hands on' Isla allows the riders to get as involved as much as they want…this is a much more rounded experience of riding than at yards where BHS standards are strictly enforced"
>
> (Trish, Livery: Cavallo)

Trish suggests that Isla's approach to equestrianism provides an informal introduction for riders without compromising standards of care. When I spoke to Isla about her relaxed style, she described it as follows, "I think of it as the 'Army' method, inherited from Phil [deceased husband], I like it and through the years it's proved an asset with people, the clients come back" (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo). I asked Isla to expand on the meaning of the 'Army' method:

> "It's about developing that trust with a powerful animal for instance, in the army the horse and rider depend on each other so they are taught to understand, feel and read when they [horse] are going to be scared and help reassure the horse, it's a partnership not forced…you both [horse and rider] learn routines and discipline…There is an empathic bond created and responsibility for something other than oneself"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

From Isla and Trish's descriptions of Cavallo, similar to Fohlen, the care and respect of the horse is central to integrating both horse and rider into equestrianism. Although the two processes of learning are markedly different, Fohlen formally introduces behavioural rules and regulations. Isla's informal mode revolves around the concept of enjoying the horse and riding as she encapsulated whilst watching a summer camp for 35 children, "it's all about the kids isn't it? They're off the streets, learning respect and enjoying their riding, great!" (Field notes, Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo).

The statement above raises fundamental questions about the accreditation and enforcement activities of equine organisations, such as the BHS. Isla's non-engagement with the BHS is in part anchored to the same principle for a shared interest: the horse. But, Isla views their regulations as compromising the bond possible between horse and rider. This is symptomatic of passion, but is expressed in terms of values and beliefs about what the 'experience' of riding and horse care should be, which is in itself part of the conscious aspect of the complex system (Geyer and Rihani, 2010). From a sociological perspective, this might be grounded in the belief of what an experience should consist of, likely to

be influenced by Isla's lifelong experiences with horses; the typical 'horsey' type (Latimer and Birke, 2009).

Moving on to discuss the formal aspects of the business, I enquired about the issue of profits and growth, Isla commented on business trends:

> "Year on year there's no increase in numbers [participants] or profitability, you should see some growth shouldn't you? This is what makes it hard, you always have up take and drop off in this business, it is difficult to keep on an even keel…Liveries keep you afloat, you don't make a great deal of profit, but their money covers the overheads and the lesson are more cream on top of that, which allows us to refresh tack and such like"
>
> (Field notes, Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

And on the subject of insurance, health and safety and liability overheads, Isla added, "Well, everything is still the same there, premiums are very high, rates are high and when you are teaching school children the premiums are high" (Field notes, Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo). From these two extracts the subjects of participant turn over and overhead premiums impact on profit margins, in addition, Cavallo's livery business makes enough profit to sustain the business. As described in the staffing structure below (Table 6.4), the cost of hiring replacement staff for Isla has also effected profit levels, as Isla points out, "I come last in line, once the horses, suppliers, rent and staff have all been taken care of, then I receive the remainder" (Field notes, Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo).

These statements in part echo Bacon's (2005, 2009) concerns about inadequate business acumen in the horse industry (world). Such a view also masks that the motive for participation might not be a monetary one but rather a socio-cultural choice relation to a 'horsey' lifestyle as described by Latimer and Birke (2009) when exploring the horse-world. Isla's statement of being "last in line" is demonstrative of a social motive far above an economic one.

6.5.2 Staffing Structure

Over the past six months the staffing structure at Cavallo has changed because as Isla admits, her age (69) is beginning to impact on performing daily tasks, as she described "I can't be as 'hands on' and so I have to employ somebody to fill the gap" (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo). The number of full-time staff increased from three to four, supported by three free-lance instructors, volunteers (participants) and resident liveries to care for the fifty horses on site (22 School/28 Livery). Table 6.4 describes the staff, role, age, qualifications and time employed:

Table 6.4: Cavallo team structure

Full-time:

Amber (40)	Head Girl/Hunt groom, BHS Stage II, employed for 12 years
Richard (36)	Instructor/groom, BHS Stage I, employed for 10 years
Tom (16)	Apprentice groom, studying for NVQ level I (horse care management), employed for 1 year
Jan (35)	Instructor/groom, BHS Stage II, employed for 6 months

Part-time:

Iona (49)	Instructor BHS Stage III, employed for 11 years
Rose (51)	Instructor BHS Stage II, (now living in Spain and spends several months per year with Isla to assist during peak times; Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays), employed for 9 years
Heather (19)	BHS Stage I, (currently a University Student – non-horse related), assists at weekend, and peak holiday periods, employed for 1 year

Amber and Iona are responsible for instructing the majority of lessons, with Isla (proprietor) teaching several times per week. As indicated above, during holiday periods, Rose and Heather assist with tuition demand. Prior to and during the hunting season (November-March) Amber is also responsible for training (improving fitness), preparing (plaiting and tacking up), and transporting

resident hunter liveries (horses prepared for the hunting season) to and from the hunt. This places a further strain on the small number of staff to instruct and manage 50 horses. In comparison to Fohlen, the routine for the completion of generic tasks was approached differently, as one livery, Pete, pointed out, "Amber tries her best…there's usually stuff [manure and equipment] everywhere and your stuff [equipment] goes missing, there's no urgency to get anything finished" (Field notes, Pete: Cavallo). However, Pete added:

> "Having said that it's [Cavallo] convenient, the hacking is good, Isla's knowledge is great and the atmosphere is fantastic…It's not alone with problems, I've heard this about other yards, it's common, the problem is a lack of quality staff"
>
> (Field notes, Pete: Cavallo)

These extracts suggest that Cavallo lacks a structured routine to complete tasks and this is attributed to the quality of staff available in the horse-world, rather than the staff to horse ratio at Cavallo. Discussing the issue of staff, I asked Amber her opinion on recruitment to equestrian careers, she replied:

> "It's so hard to get staff now…I think it's just the sheer hard work involved, irregular hours…It's all changed the love of horses doesn't seem to attract people into a commitment in the horse world anymore…not when you have a clean office job for the same or slightly more money"
>
> (Field notes, Amber, Head Girl: Cavallo)

Resembling staff recruitment issues at Equus and Hengst, Amber also speculated that the role of a groom is not viewed as an attractive or 'clean' career which makes the task of recruiting and retaining staff difficult:

> "I have been looking to retire and take a 'backseat', ideally getting someone in who could teach, had qualifications to help with the insurance[24] and have the option to part-own the business, but I'm struggling to find anyone of that description!
>
> (Field notes, Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

[24] The number of professional qualifications held by an instructor/owner can subsequently reduce insurance premiums by a small percentage.

The Horse Strategy has recognised that the industry faces the staffing issues highlighted by Amber and Isla (see Aim 4, pages 58-62). However, the proposed action plans necessarily take time to implement and consequently have little impact on the current shortage of experienced, qualified and committed staff required for riding centres (Lantra., 2006).

As discussed in reference to earlier cases, there remains a consistent and recurring human capital issue as part of the conscious complex system operating at grassroots level. However, while the human capital problem was previously focused on a skills gap, the statements in this instance raise a far greater socio-cultural problem. The attraction of individuals into the horse-world as workers appears to be getting harder, partially as if working in a riding centre is viewed as an unattractive career option but also because of a reduced passion for equestrianism among the wider general public. That is, outside of the horse-world, the symbolic nature of the horse has much less of an effect, necessitating an alternative means to engage this group of potential participants. It is possible that historical decline in equestrianism (BHS, 2000) as a social and cultural phenomenon may explain part of this supply-side problem—that is, if the majority of employees are sourced from those with a historical background in equestrianism, then any historical decline in participation will be reflected in a present day decline in labour availability (Lantra., 2006). This represents a greater long term 'wicked problem' for riding centres and the envisaged transformation into a horse-industry.

6.5.3 Participant experience

To examine the experience at riding at Cavallo, two profiles are now introduced. The first is Pete, a livery who has two horses stabled at Cavallo chosen to demonstrate the experience of a 'happy hacker'. The second profile includes Clara and Elisa, two sisters who are regular participants at Cavallo, chosen to demonstrate the relaxed approach to riding adopted at this centre.

Box 6.7: Happy Hacker

Pete (65) described how he initially became interested in equestrianism, "I used to ride in my youth, but working and life meant that I'd not ridden for a long time" (Field notes, Pete, livery: Cavallo). When I enquired why he re-started, he replied:

> "Riding saved my life in a nutshell! I own my business…working every hour that god sends…along the way I forgot about life and more importantly fun! The big 'wake-up' call was when my kidneys failed, so I had a transplant [20 years ago] and then later a quadruple bypass [4 years ago]…So I decided to start riding again, now I am fitter, relaxed and enjoying both life and riding"
>
> (Field notes, Pete, livery: Cavallo)

This example illustrates that riding can have positive health benefits both physically and mentally for participants, as Pete expressed, "horses are life savers, I think I would be dead by now if it weren't for mine" (Field notes, Pete, livery: Cavallo). Upon his return to riding, Pete received 2-3 lessons from Isla, but then reverted to hacking on school horses. Pete bought Moon, an eighteen year-old mare after eight months of riding and in the past year bought Thor, a nine year-old gelding. He chose to stable his horses at Cavallo because of the yards links to hunting and as he stated, "it's the social side of the stables too, you are with likeminded people who discuss horses and you can get involved in everything including going to the pub" (Field notes, Pete, livery: Cavallo). Pete rides everyday hacking both his horses and is an active member of the local hunt.

Box 6.8: Rural tradition

Clara (8) and Elisa (10) commenced riding because of their Father's experiences as their mother described as follows, "he used to ride as a boy and the girls have listened to his stories of riding without saddles on the farm. So it went from there, they wanted to start riding and that was it" (Field notes, Clara and Elisa: Cavallo). As Clara and Elisa were riding, their parents continued to elaborate on the impact riding has had on the family, as Sarah (36) and Fred (39) described the experience:

> S: "They absolutely love it…I've never had anything to do with horses...I was quite frightened of them, because of their physical size, but I am actually enjoying learning how they act around the girls and me. I've started riding as the girls begged me to do it, and surprisingly, I am loving it too. There's nothing like trying to understand what they are thinking and trying to get them to go in the right direction is there?"

And Fred added,

> "If they continue and take it seriously, I wouldn't mind hunting again or something like that"
>
> (Field notes, Sarah and Fred, parents: Cavallo)

The family's commitment to riding was further demonstrated by Fred's remarks:

> "We have a big house in the centre of Charlton and if the girl's are still keen to have a pony in the next couple of years I will consider selling it and buying somewhere more rural again. We have all not settled in the middle of town, I like to be in the countryside, so I really like coming here with the girls, it gives me an excuse to get out of the town for a few hours!"
>
> (Field notes, Sarah and Fred, parents: Cavallo)

This example builds on the previous discussion of participant experience by highlighting family (Kay, 2004), the home and community as settings for change (Sport England., 2004b) leading to a social aspect as determinants of participation. However, what appears important in this instance is that determinants interact and build on each other, escalating towards a greater degree of participation that seems increasingly driven by the social aspect of equestrianism. This dynamic is not well presented in the Framework for Sport, but was found to be significant when looking at longitudinal "life-style shifts"

across sports participation (Sport England., 2005). For example, Fred's 'shift' in becoming a father has provided the opportunity to re-engage with equestrianism facilitated by the participation of his daughters.

The previous sections have provided an overview of the sites and highlighted some of the issues the centres facing to increase participation and engage with the Horse Strategy. The remaining sections specifically address the research questions from a grassroots perspective.

6.6 What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?

From the participant experiences above a recurring issue was the cost of participating in horse riding. To an extent, this creates its own structural constraint on participation because a certain outlay is needed in advance to enable participation. This is directly connected to the resource constraint of income and each participant therefore faces a relative cost of participation and its affordability varies based on relative income (Downward, 2007). In effect then, this structural constraint is not consistent in its effect on participation. However, high income does not necessarily equate to high participation or greater levels or forms of participation either (e.g., from leisure to competitive sports). There remains a fundamental question about the willingness to participate and grow that participation which draws on intangible issues beyond income. For example, ability and training, well-being, desire and passion are relevant reasons influencing participation (BHS., 2010). Thus, while ability to participate may be a function of income it does not explain the willingness to participate.

The willingness to participate centres more on the establishment and communication of shared values and interests in relation to the extent to which the individual attaches themselves to horses; the 'hook' (Wipper, 2000). So for example, horse lovers are more likely to be attracted to a centre that strongly

advocates an ethical approach whereas, leisure riders are likely to be less selective (Brandt, 2004).

Looking at what motivates people to ride echoing Downward's (2007) research, several factors were found:

> "I suppose it seems obvious to me…it's been my life and a saviour many times. I have been through tough times personally, and the bond with my horses and opening up that opportunity to others has kept me going when I was ready to quit. The feeling of developing that trust with a powerful animal, that could not listen to me at all, but chooses to engage with me and seek to understand me as I do them, is rewarding. Ok, sometimes you could kill them when they revert to fight or flight at a small bird or something, but you learn to understand, feel and read when they are going to be scared and you can help reassure the horse… There is an empathic bond created and responsibility for something other than oneself"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

As this quotation shows, for Isla, the development of a bond with a horse is what determined her participation. And, as a result of continuing to participate she had enjoyed a lifelong "partnership" with horses, which inspired her to become a proprietor (Wipper, 2000: 51).

It appears that this influential factor of bonding and partnering a horse was a determinant 'hook' of participation shared by proprietors, staff and participants alike:

> "I think the partnership with a horse and the benefits it can have throughout society"
>
> (Fiona, proprietor: Fohlen)

> "We had horses in the family and it went from there, when I was young, I took some qualifications and began teaching…meeting people who are interested in being with horses, that sort of thing, obvious I suppose?"
>
> (Rose, instructor: Cavallo)

> "Yes, I like to groom and hug the ponies, I feel a bit closer to them"
>
> (Florence: Equus)

> "I would love to have my own pony …I love them, I love pony club and I love riding"
>
> (Field notes, Adele: Hengst)

> "I always wanted to do it… I enjoy lessons and having contact with the horse. I don't have a favourite aspect of riding I enjoy all of them"
>
> (Thomas: Hengst)

> "I have always loved animals; several members of family have an equestrian interest, I also like the magic of communicating with an animal and also the thrill of riding...Even after almost 2 years with my horse, the bond is constantly improving and there are so many things still to learn. My horse is my pet and the fact that it can be ridden is only a bonus. The only thing that could make me part with my horse voluntarily would be if we should no longer get along"
>
> (Heather, Livery: Cavallo)

> "I am interested in understanding them [horses] without cruelty, Monty Roberts[25] style…to communicate with them…To recognise that they still have this fight or flight instinct and you can bond and work with them in such a manner that you can understand how and to what they are more likely to react. Fascinating"
>
> (Field notes, Pete, livery: Cavallo)

In relation to the importance of the bond with a horse and the 'hook' for participants, while observing several existing and potential participants, a distinct pattern emerged. Staff allowed participants to pat, stroke and interact with the horses, followed by the typical first question of "What's the horse's name?" (Field notes, all sites). As Atwood-Lawrence (1985: 123) suggested, "naming" a horse is significant as the process distinguishes the horse's status from that of other animals and serves to place the "horse as an agent who is to a certain extent *within* human society". For example, the name is then used to converse with the horse and initiate a closer partnership or 'hook'. What is more, as these examples show, other determinants emerged; the influence of

[25] The inventor of the "natural" horsemanship method of equestrianism, which bears his name.

"family" (Kay, 2004), "household" tastes in relation to horses or an equestrian interest (Downward, 2007), and the personal decision to want to participate (one of the three constraints specified by Ravenscroft, 2004).

What was noticeable across all four sites was the lack of male participants which is consistent with the National Equestrian Survey findings, which reported the dominance of female participants within the riding centre context (BETA, 2006, 2011 , BHS., 2010). One of the proprietors offered their views on why this gender bias existed, which was disproportionate to gender differences at the professional level:

> "Males are not interested in riding centres are they? It just doesn't hold their interest, that's why you don't see them hanging around stables much unless they are gay! The Irish guys go onto be jockeys but that's because they are very much agriculturally based over there…it's all in the breeding programmes, etc., nothing much else to do but ride in the real rural areas! Here, they won't play horseball, just not interested in the slightest. Riding doesn't hold their attention, going round in circles they need more excitement than girls, so no, you don't get many boys coming through this route. The top male rider's usually come from farming backgrounds or rich stock who are involved in competing"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

This explanation is only one opinion and links to the historic roles of males and horses within the cavalry or agricultural contexts, and as society modernised to replace the horse with automation, male riders tend to originate from agriculture or from wealthy families, into more *exciting* competitive activities (Clutton-Brock, 1992 , DiMarco, 2008). However, as Claire also suggests, recent research has found that gay men are beginning to dominate participation in certain disciplines of equestrianism; dressage (Dashper, 2012). In this paper, Dashper (2012:1) shows that "equestrian sport" offers "an unusually tolerant environment for gay men in which heterosexual men of all ages demonstrate low levels of homophobia".

The willingness to participate (as part of the motivation to do so) may in some way be grounded both in the identity of the individual, as well as the identity they seek to convey or aspire to. For example, as the horse-world has its own identity, when individuals start to share values or ideals contained within that identity as well as their own, a convergence is likely to follow that motivates participation strengthening the "conscious complex system" (Geyer and Rihani, 2010). Over time, this can perpetuate, thereby maintaining the vested interests of the horse-world (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , North, 1995). Potentially, this could result in strengthening inertia and resistance to relinquishing the horse-world and adds to the complex wicked problem of transformation into a horse-industry. However, if those values can be aligned with the Horse Strategy, a new industry identity may emerge.

6.6.1 The leisure or "fad" rider

As Birke and Latimer (2009: 7) argue, there are two types of equestrian participants in the "New Countryside", one "horsey" and the other "leisure-oriented". The differences between these two groups were noticed by the staff across the sites:

> "They come in, pay their membership, get a kit from the gift shop…they have about 6 weeks' worth of lessons and then they go off and do something else… for a long time I couldn't understand, I thought it was the instructors, the ponies, we have tried to identify issues like that. We have even rang customer's who left and there's been the odd one who had a fall and didn't want to come back and that's fair enough, but the majority said they just wanted to do something else, just moved on, no big deal, no real reason for it, which was very strange"
>
> (Kay, Yard Manager: Equus)

The staff felt unaccustomed to the leisure-oriented and that it made it difficult to teach this group, as riders they:

> "Are very nervous, not the "roughty toughty" type that would fall off and get back on, they will cry at the drop of a hat, some cry before they even get on a pony. I have heard this a lot from other centres and I've seen it. I have asked a customer "is it something I have said or done" when I'm teaching, "what's the problem?" "Oh, I don't like that pony, ooohhh". It's like why are you riding if you are so

> terrified? They seem to enjoy it in the end, but really have no confidence what so ever…At one stage I was thinking "what the hell are we doing?"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

Speaking to the participants, this observation seemed to be supported:

> "I missed coming, it was just a little bit boring just sitting around at home, I just wanted to learn more things so I got over my nerves around the horse a bit and I saw the Funky Fools on the telly"
>
> (Grace: Equus)
>
> "I am nervous but, I like learning about the stuff what to do with the horse"
>
> (Poppy: Equus)

This catering to two different types of rider within the same class might entail instructors providing poorer lessons to meet the needs of not only the participant but those of the parents who aspire for the children to learn a perceived class-related or elitist activity (Veblen, 2005):

> "Some of them are nervous, you get the dedicated ones who want them to learn and accept that they fall off but some of them are really nervous and it does come from the parents being pushy, they want them to do this and that and some of them are just not natural riders and you want them to have fun…when I learnt to ride as soon as you could you were off out into the countryside, but you just wouldn't dare do it now. Very safe and very controlled"
>
> (Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst)
>
> "The trouble is nowadays riding centres have become glorified crèches, you charge kids to come and muck out in the name of horse management and that used to be free, where a kid could earn a free ride at the end of the day, that no longer happens because of liability insurance and health and safety…You see, you worked to ride, you wouldn't get that these days, Mammy and Daddy are expected to foot the bill, the children would not dream of working in order to ride. Plus as we have said, you just can't have people on the yard unless they are covered by insurance and liability it's crazy…The other thing is you don't get working pupils anymore, very rarely, the colleges have taken people and they come out during the week, but don't work weekends? How does that teach them about how it is in the real world of horses?"
>
> (Field notes, Brian, Advanced Instructor: Cavallo)

It is not unusual to come across different social groups or types of individuals when considering participation in any particular activity (Rowe *et al.*, 2004 , Sport England., 2010). However, what is apparent in the above statements is that leisure-oriented riders, proprietors and staff have very different social expectations to the extent that the traditional equestrians do not seem to understand or appreciate the implications of these differences. Doing so may unlock ways to revise these social differences to accelerate or increase equestrian participation.

6.7 What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?

During the consultation process with grassroots equestrians as part of the Henley Centre Report (2004), the issue of barriers to increasing participation that were raised included the profitability of riding centres (Bacon, 2005, 2009), cost, overheads and liabilities (Newsdesk, 2009a). The proprietors and staff in this study were no exception and the issue of cost for participants was a recurrent topic. This reiterates previous concerns about acumen and managerial capability.

6.7.1 Economics: cost, overheads, insurance, liabilities and staff

In chapter five the BEF RDC made the point that equestrianism was an expensive sport and there was no way of getting away from that fact. This opinion was reflected across all sites:

> "It's just so expensive and I don't think there is anything anybody can do about that in particular, but I am sure that riding and horses could be brought to a wider audience"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

The implications of overheads for proprietors links to the cost of equestrianism, as the centre manager continues, "all trainees or volunteers need to be supervised and it's actually quicker to do the work yourself, but that's what we are here for to encourage and help them learn. So that is why it is expensive to

run as you have to put the staff in to supervise them, we are at the moment just about covering our running costs". Despite Bacon's (2002, 2005) argument that the decline of riding centres was because of proprietors lack of business acumen, Claire (Proprietor: Hengst) demonstrated that this was not the case when running the onsite hotel and riding centre:

> "I don't know that it is worth investing in the riding centre as it's very difficult to recoup the monies laid out, you know what I mean? This place (Hotel) has paid for itself and the investment will be recouped easily as we are doing so well, but the riding centre is a different question. If we are talking idealistically, well then another indoor riding arena would be the way to go, if money were no object but landing yourself with a £100k loan for very little return doesn't make commercial sense does it? This yard can't compete with the larger Bishop Burton's of this world who specialise in examinations, etc., or the Yorkshire Riding Centre"
>
> (Claire, proprietor: Hengst)

The example shows that Claire had the necessary skills to run a successful business in terms of the Hotel and has the insight to understand that the riding centre in comparison does not offer a valuable commercial opportunity. As mentioned, several factors combine to restrict profitability and return on investment to enable improvement in the riding centre (e.g., adding a new indoor arena). Another overhead issue involved wage levels when profits margins are low, as Isla (Proprietor: Cavallo) argued:

> "Insurance has increased by approx 200-300% in recent years and liability is now the responsibility of the owner. There is no question of proving who is liable it automatically falls onto the owners shoulders following a legislative change… I also feel that the minimum wage issue has not helped small businesses to remain viable, several yards in and around this area have folded; they weren't as well established or reputable, and what with overheads, the liability and insurance premiums, they just couldn't return a profit. Small businesses are being killed by these sorts of issues, but nobody really listens it seems, I've tried speaking to councils, but the elitism tag is still there and the presumption money oozes out of horses is a dated concept, more like oozes out of your pocket when you own one! I really think it gets kids in touch with rurality and nature, they don't have a clue what it's about, well most of them these days. There is plenty of interest out there and it should be easy to run a riding school but it's the rates and stuff like that, which are killing the chance of

> replacements, the places shut down and the facilities are depleted in line with closure"

Two further issues that the proprietors and staff felt strongly affected riding centre profitability were farmer diversification schemes and the current litigation culture, which it was felt led to several riding centre closures:

> "I know of a yard where for the third time in 10 years, the farmer's wheat stores have burst open right next to the field where the horses are being kept and this has resulted in deaths of horses and he hasn't been prosecuted. Another horse on that yard is very sick. His daughter used to look after the horses, but she's gone in a different direction now and nobody is looking after the horses or regulating the farmer! My issue is with all the new equestrian owners, how do they know what he's got in terms of insurance liability or employers liability, how as a new owner do I know what they have? You only have to put up employers liability but not insurers liability, so why is that? Is it because in this culture of litigation would it attract more claims around horses? I guess I am a bit bitter about all the insurance liabilities and health and safety regulations and I can see why people just don't bother doing it because Joe Bloggs down the road isn't complying so why should they? But at the end of the day it would be better to the horse industry if everybody did"
>
> (Nicole, freelance instructor: Equus)

Proprietors in rural areas where diversification payments had been made in the wake of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in 2001 felt the payment schemes gave local farmers a competitive advantage:

> "A major problem around here is the diversifying farmer's they are all getting grants to set up livery yards and we have never had any help. We do all this teaching to keep children off the streets, encourage them to come and help, try and give them an insight into a different way of life and work and we never got a snifter really. That is my main gripe at the moment. I make about £2 profit on each lesson, but when you take out all the feed, rent and wages there's not a lot left. To make a profit against these farmers I would have to charge £40 per hour and that's never going to work is it?"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

The added factor of coming under threat of litigation was also a major concern:

> "In general most riding schools are utterly paranoid about being sued in the current climate…I know of another instructor who is very experienced, whilst finishing the end of a lesson, she asked them to line up on the centre line and one horse bumped into the other and the other horse jumped out of the way and the rider fell off and broke their arm, and she was sued. We had to get on and be videoed riding the so-called vicious horses to prove to the insurer that all precautions have been taken to ensure that the girl would not have fallen off"
>
> (Nicole, freelance instructor: Equus)

> "If somebody sued us it would mean closure for this business. The trouble is it is usually the good centres that go because they have a reputation and people know it's a good place to ride. I agree with litigation if the person has not been advised of the horse's temperament, but the majority of cases are just for the money and we need protecting from people like that"
>
> (Scarlett, Head Girl: Fohlen)

The continuing issues facing riding centres of overheads, insurance premiums and litigation led to a negative prediction for the future of the horse-world/industry:

> "It's a dying industry in my opinion, being killed quite simply by high rates, insurance and liability. The old fashioned establishments like this one are a dying breed, which is sad because this is where many generations of riders have developed and gone onto greater things. Given the current economic crisis I can only see this getting worse rather than better, this winter is going to be expensive, due to grain and bedding shortages, it will hit everybody in the purse…the weather, cancellations and fuel increases this year was a disaster! It takes so much time and effort, for in reality very little return unless you publicise it really well and you get high attendance figures which is not guaranteed"
>
> (Brian, Advanced Instructor: Cavallo)

These examples of rates and minimum wage were cited by riding centre owners as restricting business growth (Bacon, 2002b, 2005). Bacon (2002: 1) argued:

> "There is little evidence that environmental influences such as business rates and minimum wage are, by themselves, sufficient to cause business failure… The most successful riding schools have the management skills to creatively exploit the potential of their location"

Bacon implied that it is the owner's lack of business acumen which contributed to low profit margins or failure of riding centres. Whilst this can be applicable to

some skill areas, in this study, when an owner used their business initiative to try to improve their overhead liabilities, they faced a prejudiced attitude, viewing equestrianism as synonymous with wealth and therefore not requiring assistance in comparison to other small businesses. The complexity involved in managing the economic aspects of running a riding centre cannot be ignored because of the direct impact on increasing participation. The reference to the unpredictable nature of attendance at riding centres or special events links back to the determinants of participation. Personal, interpersonal and societal/structural constraints influencing participation are reflected in the responses from participants (Ravenscroft, 2004):

> "The main thing is the cost…the boots, hat and everything else are all so expensive especially as she is growing. The lessons are expensive compared to gymnastics, but this is her favourite of all the things she does… You can see how much effort she puts in. She loves the Pony Club too and as long as she's happy we will keep coming…she doesn't like to miss a week, even for holidays"
>
> (Field notes, Adele's mother: Hengst)

> "Riding is an expensive hobby, but we can maybe afford to get a pony on loan[26] for Katie (daughter) and keep it at Eva's [instructor's farm] and I think I will look for a horse too"
>
> (Field notes, Alicia: Equus)

> "Participating in events is expensive…Red is 18hh so to take him anywhere I have to hire a horse box, which is very expensive…but because of the cost, feed, upkeep and general maintenance of a horse, I feel it [riding] is good value for money because it's the only interest I have"
>
> (Diary sheet, Penny: Fohlen)

> "The cost of lessons and competitions is also expensive and you have to buy the appropriate jacket and shirt as well…I do feel that the experience of riding does make it good value for money, but I can't take part as often as I would like to because of the cost"
>
> (Field notes, Liz: Fohlen)

[26] The pony/horse is "loaned" to a rider when the owner is in a situation where they are unable to accommodate riding their horse but do not want to sell the animal.

> "Apart from wishing I was younger, not really! Being serious, I recognise that riding is out of reach for many, as owning a horse is expensive as you can tell [pulling out his pockets to show he has no money] I have two, waving bye, bye, to my cash, but it's worth every penny"
>
> (Field notes, Pete, livery: Cavallo)

> "People say it's not the buying, but the keeping of the horse which is expensive…I've looked into it with Isla and she says she would help us find a pony when we are ready so we don't buy a 'duff' one…as I said if the girls are still keen and it's not just a fad, then I will probably buy them a pony and relocate back to the countryside, we would all benefit from that"
>
> (Field notes, Fred, father: Cavallo)

The barriers cited by grassroots proprietors, staff and equestrians present a problem for implementing the Horse Strategy. The specific aim of developing a professional national network of riding centres (BHIC, 2005: 32-34) reflects the complex issue of resolving and managing the "emerging conflict and tension" from the "different views and ideas about where the organization and its workers should be heading" (Haynes, 2003: 73) when trying to implement the Strategy in a top-down manner. On the one hand, the BHIC and Defra shift the responsibility of implementation from themselves to the grassroots as "successful citizens" (Ravenscroft, 1993). On the other hand, they do not provide sufficient information about the Horse Strategy, support or "keep pace with external change" such as the rise of litigation and liability cases against riding centres and the effects of the economic crises in relation to the ongoing implementation process (Haynes, 2003: 73). The issue of a lack of support from equine organisations was also felt to prevent riding centres from becoming more profitable and attracting new participants.

The evidence in this section paints a different picture both for the riding centres as well as for the general public in participating in equestrianism and in time graduating to become co-opted implementers of the Horse Strategy. Passionate interests appear to push participants in both groups past the hurdles placed by the structural and fixed costs inherent in equestrianism. However, when willingness to participate is there across groups, the ongoing ability of riding

centres to cater for user groups is becoming increasingly compromised by market imperfections and market failures resulting from the economic crisis and poorly considered public policy (Haynes, 2012). Economic crisis, such as the financial market failure in 2008 and the effects of Foot and Mouth Disease (2001) compromised participation by reducing willingness to participate as part of motivation. However, a further problem stems from government failure to understand the horse-world (as discussed earlier in terms of the perception of the horse-world as wealthy and elitist). Because of these clouded judgements and a systematic failure on behalf of government to visualise the spill-over effects of policy decisions in industries (e.g. agriculture) with bearing on the horse-world, the ability of stakeholders to engage with the Horse Strategy has been affected (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b). For example, diversification payments to farmers created a market failure in the horse-world as their ability to compete on an equal footing was compromised by this government intervention (Crossman and Walsh, 2008 , Turner *et al.*, 2006). While this could be attributed to complex systems as outlined in complexity theory (Byrne, 1998 , Haynes, 2003 , Hill and Hupe, 2009), a more viable explanation lies in vested interests (Alford and Friedland, 1975). Inevitably, macro-economic events trigger lobbying responses across a host of other interest groups as well. Their relative power affects the response of decision makers, and in this case, to the detriment of the horse-world/industry.

6.7.2 Equine organisations

In terms of receiving industry support, the BHS approval system, and liaison with the RDO were expressed by Claire as leaving the centre "feeling alone, you get no support from the industry full stop…in all honesty we have received very little from them except criticism". Claire then expanded on the BHS criticism:

> "They [BHS] just descend and are concerned with horse welfare so we get hammered in terms of not "doing the right thing" here compared to places like [rural equine] colleges…who have pots of money to make sure risk assessments are completed and in place, we just don't have the staff"

(Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

From this example, the combination of no support, unfavourable comparisons against government-funded colleges and criticism whilst paying for BHS approval left Claire feeling that the BHS operate a biased system. She continued, "they never come and put on courses here which we would like to do, but we are not part of the clique and never will be…there's still a lot of snobbery and elitism out there, although nobody will admit to it" (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst). This extract infers that the BHS is an elitist organisation and Hengst is criticised upon this basis rather than standard criteria. Despite Hengst's reprimands by the BHS, they remain an approved centre. I put these observations to Felicity (BHS Chairperson), first, regarding the approval system:

> "Some of the yards seek approval because they want the kudos of the BHS name, but are not prepared to work to the standards expected. I would see it from a very different perspective, they know the rules, they have the criteria on the piece of paper they know they should not be working horses under the age of 5, they should also be employing an AI [Assistant Instructor, see Appendix XXV]. However, you go there [centre] and there is a 4 year-old [horse] in the lesson and the next, and the next and you think "hello" they know the rules and they are deliberately, carelessly, thoughtlessly breaking them all of the time"

It is interesting to note the very powerful language evoked by the BHS Chairperson that sets the organisation in conflict with riding centres as participants instead of treating them as important allies. This is one of the key aspects of the CLEAR Framework to encourage engagement; "asking" and "responding" to participants' input rather than creating a platform for inertia and conflict (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 286). This only serves to treat proprietors as atomistic actors as opposed to an interdependent community. The BHS' vested interests in its own activities and legitimacy in comparison to others informs this behaviour and fails to recognise the need for integration at grassroots level with respect to the horse-world.

Second, I asked about a criticised yard retaining approval:

> "I can't speak for the inspecting officer, but we are rigorous and I can only presume that they [centre] were sternly advised to improve some of their practices, but still met the standards…that's about as much as I can offer without visiting the centre or looking at the report"
>
> (Felicity, BHS Chairperson)

The onus was directed back to the centre to follow BHS standards to retain approved status. BHS approval 'guarantees', to a certain degree, that an approved centre provides a quality riding environment of facilities, horses, welfare, equipment (tack) and instructors. Although Hengst retains approval at present, Claire stated "I thought it would be good to be BHS approved and this would help from a business perspective … overall I don't think we have received a good service for the money, I'm not sure we will keep up the membership". Other proprietors demonstrated similar feelings towards BHS membership and what support is received in return for membership:

> "The BHS do very little to help the likes of this yard. We are extremely busy at present with the average weekend group ride to the maximum limit of 8 per group. We can't teach the under 4's as you can't get insurance for them, plus staff are really difficult to find and retain. The horses have a really beneficial effect on children, it keeps them off the streets, alright we now have to ask parents to pay for their children to come on the yard, but I am probably more lax than other places on that ruling as I'm not BHS approved. I guess if I had gone to the ABRS, then that would have been a better decision, as they seem more for the local riding centre rather than focusing on the elite end of the sport… if I was young and starting the business, then yes, I would become affiliated [a member], I don't know whether it really makes that much difference, they do come and approve you, but I would not run the stables any other way than I do now. I like to run them my way if you know what I mean, but I'm lucky in that I am experienced aren't I?"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

It is important to note from these comments that the proprietors themselves are now raising questions about the relevance and legitimacy of equine organisations, such as the BHS in vetting or approving riding centres. This raises an interesting dilemma with risks of confrontation and resistance to these levels towards further implementation of the Horse Strategy because of the lack of

dialogue and the lack of an overlapping social contract (Hobbes, [1651] 1985 , Rousseau, 1987).

Also interesting is the preference for ABRS over BHS membership with the ABRS being perceived as an organisation focused on grassroots proprietors. However, this can indicate that vested interests, for example retaining market share by the BHS stops the ABRS from establishing its rival schemes in the region:

> "I know the ABRS are in negotiations to get a rebate in terms of business rates for small schools such as ourselves, but nothing has been finalised yet, that would help with profits. We [Cavallo] do qualify for a rate reduction because we work with children but a bit more would help as we rent the stables"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

It also suggests that collaboration between the two organisations was not occurring at local-level. They are viewed as separate organisations offering different schemes. These issues link to the policy areas for change within the Framework for Sport where quality accreditation, structures and partnerships at local-level, influence the supply-side of equestrianism (Sport England., 2004b).

> "I am supportive of a Strategy to change things but I hope it's not all about the 'posh' riding centres and the little ones are forgotten. It's like hotels they are judged on facilities not whether they are providing a good experience or not just whether they tick the box for a swimming pool. I feel it should be more about the safety of horses and the quality of the instruction the ABRS are very supportive of smaller riding centres whereas I feel the BHS have always been a bit more elitist and favour the flashier centres. Many of the riding centres up here are smaller and many riders from the NE will not reach the elite levels of riding, they have no ambition to it's about being with a horse"
>
> (Kay, Yard Manager: Equus)

The evidence so far raises the question that in relation to the Framework for Sport, the policy areas for change are important to assist in increasing participation, all the sites in this study expressed concerns over equine organisation support and that elitism and discretion of the regional

representatives is used to assist certain centres and exclude others, "because the nature of service provision calls for human judgement" (Lipsky, 1980: 161):

> "The BHS are very good at laying down laws and maintaining standards and that's it. They don't even promote equestrianism to the wider public audience, they are very elitist…We had a kid who was nominated for "Sports kid of the Year" that was something the BBC ran and he got into the final, he was up against kids who were competing in Europe, he was the only equestrian representative and the parents of the other children were getting up at 5am and being really supportive to taking them for a swim or run. How can a kid whose parents are in prison compete with that? Somebody said "Well if you don't go to horse shows…" we can't afford to go to horse shows, so I said he's here because he was not doing well at school and he came to the stables and it turned him around, gone back to school, gone to college, just passed his Stage 1 (BHS)"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

Riding centres felt a lack of support from the BHS, Scarlet offered a different perspective on industry support when as a BHS gold member, she was injured at work:

> We are all 'gold' members of the BHS, as you have to be to gain your instructor qualifications and the £51 per annum provides you with rider and personal insurance cover. However, I stupidly presumed that this meant you would receive support when you were injured at work…Starlight [horse] took the top off it [finger] and it damaged the tendons, so I've had to have 'physio' and time off, but I was apparently not covered for this and they were rude considering I've been a member for 20 years!"
>
> (Field notes, Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen)

This example shows that the role of the BHS is interpreted as an equine educational provider, and the subscription fee including insurance would protect members working in grassroots riding centres. However Scarlet's negative experience did not generate a helpful image of the equine body. Moreover, Kim remarked, "you don't see the BHS people apart from the inspection and at exams, you pay the 50 quid a year for what? You don't seem to get a lot for it" (Field notes, Kim: Fohlen). All the sites were reluctant to recommend that individuals took out BHS membership:

> "We only encourage our members to join the Pony Club, not full BHS membership as it is expensive and for what they would use it, there's not much point"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

> "The only people who are members on my yard are the instructors because they have to be to take the exams. Without BHS instructors you definitely would not attract participants, I do like the examinations, although again there is the issue of cost. To answer your question, no, I don't promote it to my riders"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

What we can see is that the overall impression of the BHS is negative and the ABRS lacks presence to challenge the BHS position. Little evidence of local-level collaboration was found, which indicates that implementation is failing. This is further affirmed by the fact that current membership levels of equine organisations is less than five percent of the estimated 4.3 million riders in the UK (BETA, 2006). The evidence from the grassroots level illustrates that communicating with a fragmented and diverse range of equestrians is complex and marketing strategies are required to address the perceived negative image of the equine organisations and industry as a whole.

6.7.3 Environment

In the environmental context, Claire disclosed how the original business grew, "there was always the emphasis on it [the business] being commercial and necessarily paying for itself to expand and keep going…Gradually, as it grew more plots of land were acquired to its present level [100 acres]". Hengst's consolidation plans reflect the physical limitations of the geographical location on the rural-urban fringe, as Claire revealed:

> "We have issues surrounding restricted hacking opportunities in the area there's not much access to all the fields around here and no room for expansion either. So the business is limited in the way in which it could commercially grow"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

The strategic plans for Hengst appear have taken into account both business and environmental barriers to commercial growth. If demand for livery and hotel

services continued, because of the restricted opportunity to purchase additional land, expansion could be accommodated on-site with the closure of, rather than investment in, the riding centre.

For Cavallo which is situated on a quiet rural road (without public transport) where the main traffic is local or farming vehicles, I asked if there were any issues accessing bridleways, Isla replied:

> "We have our problems, the farmers are usually fine, the difficulty we find is "townies"[27] that buy into the country and they have a right of way through their land and they are awkward. They try to stop you with their privacy being invaded but they buy a house with the right of way, they should know shouldn't they?"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

In terms of expansion to the business, Cavallo like Hengst is restricted by the physical boundaries of the farm property:

> The indoor [arena] is really only a shed, I would like to expand it, but that would cost £20,000 or more to construct it, I don't have that sort of cash to invest and I wouldn't get funding or planning from the council, the council doesn't see that it would be essential for horses that's for sure …We have 22 acres for grazing, but we have hit our capacity of 50 horses and the rest of the land here is for agricultural use…we are about as big as we can be and I don't want to move"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

These extracts illustrate that several environmental and economic factors compound the degree to which Isla could increase participation on-site. The indoor arena is too small and there were insufficient funds to allow expansion. In addition, planning permission is also a contentious issue and the site is rented from a farmer, further grazing land is unavailable and would incur a rent increase for Isla.

For the more traditional riding centres some environmental constraints apply, for example for Equus in an urban location, issues are different:

[27] A term used to describe a resident of a town who moves to a rural area and buys property.

> "Because we are here [urban] there's no real turn-out for the horses, only a tiny strip of land under the flyovers, but that's hardly suitable for the number of horses we have. Some of us who have land and take it in turns to give the horses a holiday, if you like, so they don't get frustrated and misbehave in the arena"
>
> (Kendra, freelance instructor: Equus)

The lack of turn-out and cross-country facilities raised an issue about developing staff and riders when they reached a level of competence in riding:

> "We will often find them work placements or suggest known centres as we don't have a cross country course, we don't have hacking really, but what we have got has to be of considerable quality for people to come back, that's the way I look at it...we have permission from the council to ride up at the old track stadium as long as we don't churn it up and we do go up from time to time with the older ponies and the kids you can go up and down the paths and things like that. But we have to be careful here with "non-horsey" people as they don't understand that the horses get frightened of loose dogs and prams, if we upset the public, things can be very difficult for us from the council, so we don't do it that often"
>
> (Kay, Yard Manager: Equus)

For Equus, there is little prospect of expansion in the current location and given the acknowledged deficit in the budget, no profits to reinvest. There are difficulties with keeping horses in stables all of the time and therefore, Kay (Yard Manager) adopted the following policy:

> "I like to ensure that the horses are rotated and in the quiet times during the day they get lunged, go out in the paddock, if you can call it that, or if it is wet in the indoor school. This means that they can buck and run around as horses would do in a field and it hopefully doesn't come out too much in lessons. It is inevitable that some horses don't adjust well to this environment and then I will make a decision whether it should be sold. The horses, I think should be sold regularly as this is a very different environment and some horses cope better than others, it's finding them that is the tricky part"

Environmental (e.g. location) and economic (e.g. financial) constraints create difficulties in establishing a suitable infrastructure capable of supporting increased participation. From the perspective of the Horse Strategy, environmental constraints relating to location were not considered as restricting business growth, apart from ensuring equestrianism would be considered in

future rural and land use policies (BHIC, 2005: 42-3). There is a danger of failing to take into account how much increase in participation can be accommodated within the current infrastructure constraints. Thus, addressing the social challenges of engagement with the Horse Strategy and aiming to increase participation may cloud a greater problem in realising growth—there is a supply-side issue not only relating to declining riding centres (Bacon, 2009 , Bacon and Wilkinson, 2006) but also from the inability of existing riding centres to expand.

6.7.4 Risk of riding and nervousness

Looking at barriers to participation for grassroots participants (other than cost), the issue of horses misbehaving (see previous section) at Equus may be responsible for the high levels of nervousness observed among the riders:

> "I feel my nervousness is hindering me…I am thinking I am just not good enough, but then hang on it's a riding school I'm a beginner, so is it a case of I'm hopeless or are the horses not riding school material?...the big horses seem to be only getting ridden by advanced riders…It is not so much what is happening while I am on the horse, it is what you see happening around you on other horses. I have seen a few people come off and that has made me more nervous as a rider, I know what they are capable of…She (Polly) is a funny little thing, many of them put their ears back and let you know that they are going to kick, but with her she will actually run backwards to get them"
>
> (Lucinda: Equus)

> "I think I'm nervous because I have been riding for over a year now and haven't fallen off yet!!! I feel like every time I'm getting on the horse it is going to be this time…this is holding me back in my riding, I see other people falling or the horses misbehaving and I wonder when it will be me…a lot of the time you feel like you're trying too hard and not getting anywhere"
>
> (Dairy sheet, Alicia: Equus)

Both these extracts combined with the younger participants in section 6.7.1, suggest that the urban constraints played a role in the level of nervousness observed and reported at Equus compared to other sites. That is not to say that the staff are unaware of the effects of the constraints, rather the nature of horses' fight or flight responses. Urban riding centres are artificial environments for

horses when the possibility of turn-out is limited and although this is managed, the evidence provokes that in encouraging more urban participation the welfare of the horse is threatened. On the one hand, urban riding centres provide access to horses. On the other hand, this presents an ethical issue of whether it is 'right' to subject, what is essentially an outdoor animal, to twenty-four confinement despite the good level of horse care management. A satisfactory solution is complex. Reported and observed 'misbehaving' horses indicated that several horses did not adjust to an urban setting.

Although, nerves affected other participants across the sites, this was linked to the challenge of riding and consistent with Downward's (2007) "hierarchical deliberation" of wants and needs to accept the associated risk in order to maintain the bond with a horse:

> Today I am riding Pippin – this usually unnerves me as I am unused to him but hey…. Not bothered today. I always have problems getting Pippin to stop, so at the start of the lesson we get onto this. It takes loads of walk, halt transitions, but eventually he's listening to me and we can move into trot. I am using my long white whip as I know he can be lazy and have to give him a few sharp taps. He bucked! But still I am not too bothered (what is happening to my nerves? Am I finally getting rid?).
>
> (Diary sheet, Liz: Fohlen)

> "On Saturday I had a lesson and felt really proud of myself for riding inside [which I hate]. My instructor sat on him and told me that I have to relax and he will relax. It worked!...just rode in the school for 20 minutes alone and left it at that, I felt more confident on him…When I'm on the ground I am very confident with him. It's just in the saddle that the problems begin, I'm working on it!"
>
> (Diary sheet, Penny: Fohlen)

Penny's experience was chosen to highlight the fear that many riders face when riding, particularly following severe accidents. A non-equestrian may question the logic in continuing to participate. But as Penny demonstrates the enjoyment and the "hook" of horses is central to her motivation to regain confidence. Scarlet infers if the willingness to succeed is missing then a rider is unlikely to succeed in their objectives of participation. In addition, Penny commented on

the way staff at Fohlen understood and supported her to overcome her barriers to participation, "their experience is wonderful and all I have to do is ask a question about something I find puzzling. Scarlet has the patience to take the lesson at my pace and to get on Red to demonstrate how I can make improvements, that's priceless" (Field notes, Penny: Fohlen). However, this was not the case for all participants when learning to ride:

> "They [staff] know how I feel so I don't suppose it matters telling you. We [family] feel upset at the moment we were not given the right information about Charlie when we bought him. We were told he was six, but he's only four, plus his feet are bad, he doesn't like being shod and the farrier we saw said he couldn't be ridden without shoes. He's useless, not "ride-able" I rode him once and he was dangerous"
>
> (Field notes, James: Hengst)

From this passage, the reaction of James is based on his perception that Charlie was not a sound (in relation to both temperament and physical defects, e.g. lameness) horse and he infers that he was deliberately misled by the "staff". Later the same afternoon, I was able to ask Shannon (Yard Manager) about the situation, she replied:

> They have been tellin' everybody [participants and liveries] that he's [Charlie] no good and if he doesn't get shod then he will develop arthritis. This is a horse that they bought and didn't even ride once in the 3 months that they had him, no wonder his feet are a mess…Charlie is a novice and we did try and tell them this when they wanted to buy him, but wouldn't listen… nobody will buy him when he's a lovely horse"
>
> (Field notes, Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst)

This extract suggests that there has been a possible breakdown in communication and transmission of meaning between the staff and James regarding Charlie. Shannon states that purchasing another novice horse was discouraged. However, James perceives he was misinformed resulting in the purchase of a dangerous horse. This example illustrates how experiences and participation with the same horse are seldom predictable. Horses can be "dangerous" and "lovely" at the same time.

The issues about nervousness and perception of how a horse should behave as well as what a riding experience 'should' consist of are dependent on the socialisation of participants with equestrianism (Birke and Brandt, 2009). Those with historical experience of horses are to some extent socialised into the nuances of the horse-world (Steinkraus, 1968 , Wipper, 2000), but in its absence, some degree of social conditioning is required.

6.8 To what extent are grassroots equestrians, i) aware of, and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?

The Horse Strategy made the statement that in order for the policy to be successfully implemented:

> "Every action needs a person or, more likely, people to do it. There is not a rider or driver or worker in equestrianism who is absolved from all responsibility. If you do your bit the Strategy will be a success. If you prefer to leave it all to someone else you lose your right to complain when nothing happens"
>
> (BHIC, 2005: 8)

In this way, the Horse Strategy and the BHIC and Defra were appealing to the equestrian masses to unify behind the Strategy. However, while the BEF RDC argued that progress was being made and fragmentation was reducing, a distinct lack of awareness and engagement with the Horse Strategy emerged at grassroots level. This applied at proprietor, staff and participant levels as well:

> "The what? Well there you go, it's not known because it has very little impact for owners like me, there's lots of "in" fighting in the BHS anyway and such organisations, so unless somebody makes a stand and sorts it out the industry as a whole will never change...in reality the BHS need to listen more, and give feedback to this BHIC for what good it will do!"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

And this pattern continued for staff:

> What is this BHIC? And, Horse Strategy? [laughing] They don't care about the lower levels. It is all about the elite level that's where the money lies and the

> talent, in their opinion. Trouble is, if they helped the urban kids get interested then it would appeal to the masses and not be seen as much as a "toffs" pastime, riding can have remarkable results with kids of all ages and backgrounds.
>
> (Brian, Advanced Instructor: Cavallo)

Finally, for several participants across the four sites, the response was the same:

> "No, I've not heard of it? What is it? Should I know about it?"
>
> (Trish, livery: Cavallo)

> "I've only heard people talk about the horse-world, are we part of an industry? I'm not sure to be honest, do we produce anything? Sorry, I didn't know there was a Horse Strategy or BHIC and Defra now you come to mention it"
>
> (Fieldnotes, Parent and participant: Fohlen)

> "That's interesting, but I'm sorry I can't say I have ever heard of it, probably not what you want to hear!"
>
> (Fieldnotes, Livery: Hengst)

The centre manager of Equus was the only person to have had heard of the Horse Strategy. However, she felt that it offered little to help riding centres and few benefits for participants and would be difficult to implement:

> "There is a need for help here…For example, they are talking about the social and educational benefits from horse riding so I wonder where all the input came from? A little study somewhere? The Horse Strategy? I don't think it has been well thought out at all, lovely ideas, but how to implement it…"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

These accounts suggest that the levels of fragmentation and the lack of effective communication networks identified in the Henley Centre Report (2004) have not been addressed since the implementation of the Horse Strategy in 2005. In addition, this links to the BHS RDO's comments in chapter five that resource constraints limit the degree to which she can encourage engagement with the Horse Strategy at local-level. In relation to implementing the Horse Strategy, aside from dealing with a conscious complex system (horse-world) and a

complex wicked policy problem, the lack of awareness of the Horse Strategy does not present a positive picture for successful implementation (Geyer and Rihani, 2010: 68). This prompts questions about why the grassroots appear oblivious to the Horse Strategy. The analysis presented in chapter five and these findings point to support for vested structural interests and aspects of power through the roles of the "professional monopolisers" (BHIC and Defra, BEF at local-level) and "corporate rationalisers" (BHS/ABRS) impacting on successful communication with grassroots equestrians (Alford and Friedland, 1975). In addition, it seemed as though the issues of distrust and suspicion of the equine organisations, BHIC and Defra, persisted reported in the HCR, (2004: 57).

6.9 How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

While lack of awareness is clearly a problem, it appears that a more crucial issue is trust between the layers of the horse-world in which pockets of trust are situated or absent. There is a scope to develop some form of knowledge-based trust by communicating from a basis of common interest (Dietz, 2011 , Dietz and Gillespie, 2011). But, this is unlikely to occur unless a greater social dialogue is developed among grassroots equestrians and equine organisations. The resulting "social capital" could markedly change the nature of the complex wicked problem of implementing the Horse Strategy (Putnam, 1993).

In identifying this area of policy as a 'complex wicked problem' defying resolution, I have identified two specific areas of uncertainty that characterise wicked problems in the horse-world/industry: strategic uncertainty, associated with a multiplicity of actors (a conscious complex system) and institutional uncertainty, associated with fragmented decision-making (van Bueren *et al.*, 2003: 193-4). Each groups of actors (stakeholders) had suggestions for increasing participation in equestrianism—a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for increasing engagement with the Horse Strategy. They also offered

additional insights into what, they argue, is required to achieve meaningful engagement with the Strategy.

The proprietors in this study had already expressed their lack of awareness of the Horse Strategy and when asked to suggest how this situation could be improved, their distrust for BHIC and Defra became apparent:

> "I think horsey people are frightened of all that policy stuff. They don't want people knowing their business to start with, and they feel they receive no support from the industry or government, well I did get one grant, the only grant I have ever got after the last FMD outbreak for £13,000, but that was because one client did the paperwork…really the council should be helping with these things, but there again the council can't even pay for health care, so why would horses get any money?"
>
> (Isla, proprietor: Cavallo)

The issue of a perceived lack of support for riding centres is a recurrent feature at grassroots level. In particular, it was felt that the government should support riding centres through funding, "riding mentors funded by the government…should come to the businesses and let us know what funds are available" (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst). Another perception among proprietors for lack of support was the use of the elitism 'label', associated with equestrian businesses. Approaches to councils for business rate reductions were refused, "their attitude was that if you are rich enough to run a riding school then you are rich enough to pay the rates, which is so wrong isn't it?" (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo). Therefore, until the funding situation improved, most of the proprietors and staff in this study felt they could do little to encourage engagement with the Horse Strategy:

> "What we do here we do it alone…the BHS are not there to hold your hand. I know that they say they want the Horse Strategy to work, they say this because they want the funding for the Olympics and they have to prove that they are trying to implement it and somewhere down the line we tick a little box"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

They also felt that encouraging engagement would entail "giving us proper information about what it is. The BHS or ABRS should get their fingers out and let us know, we could be missing out on something, but that's nothing new, we are forgotten" (Scarlett, Head Girl: Fohlen). The lack of trust is a distinct barrier to uncertainty reduction, as reducing uncertainty depends on knowledge. Knowledge can be developed among grassroots equestrianism through communication channels which ultimately depend on closer relationships between proprietors, staff, riders and equine organisations. For example, following the recommendations of the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) might be one way to achieve this. At present grassroots equestrians are viewed as consumers—paying membership fees to fund the vested interests of the BHS. This method does not take into account equestrians' perceptions of what they think about how the BHS allocates funds to various interests (e.g., horse welfare). To develop closer relationships more forums should be held to discuss current issues in the horse-world and then use "deliberative innovation" methods where equestrians can reflect on previous policy and its effects and have an input into how it could be improved (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001b). This method can enable the transmission of knowledge, facilitate the creation of communication networks within the horse-world and lead to engagement with future policies.

6.9.1 Increasing participation

Looking at the process of increasing participants taking into consideration the discussion so far, the use of the horse is central to turning a potential participant into an actual one. At Equus, they also aim "to give a sense of community…to bring hope to disadvantaged kids through horses and mixing with better off kids" (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus). Simply put, each new participant is not only presented with the opportunity to ride, but to engage in a social community networks to sustain the centre, to provide "social cohesion because they [networks] enable people to cooperate with one another and not just with people they know directly for mutual advantage" (Field, 2008: 14). This made Nicole (freelance instructor) working in rural and urban riding centres express her

opinion that Equus was "completely different from a traditional riding centre…It's a feeling that you are selling something, and I suppose you in a way you are, but for very different reasons compared to the traditional yards". This notion of incentivising or "selling" participation is based on appealing to the "wants and needs" or "hierarchical deliberation" of the individual and this will in turn, influence continued participation (Downward, 2007: 650-51). To achieve this "selling" Kay (Yard Manager: Equus) explained her objectives in creating lesson formats: "I like to get the kids and adults to understand the horse better, to speak their language, I mean. I ask staff to explain that pulling the pony's mouth hurts or kicking them too hard…I want them [participants] to understand this from the beginning so they can bond with horses and not just ride them". The Manager felt that these proactive methods of increasing the bond with the horse were necessary because the "true" cost of lessons for Equus would amount to charging "£30 per hour" and she conceded "nobody would pay that to ride" Kathryn (Centre Manager: Equus).

This approach becomes more understandable when Equus loses seventy percent of its participants for two weeks in August:

> "We tried to devise some advertising to attract new clients in that period … advertising doesn't really work for us, we have in the past advertised quite a lot, so what we thought was not to do this because our members will be coming back. If you believe One North East, there are masses and masses of tourists coming to the area in August, so why can't they come and ride here? They can, provided that we tell them that we can, all we have to do is get a message out to them, so we connect with One North East to let them know through their outlets to encourage people to come into the area and ride. One Best Way made the leaflets and I keep getting mixed up with One North East! One Best Way are our marketing people. We will see what happens"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

As Equus stated, the centre is in a state of financial loss and to address this issue, the business team are proactive in taking opportunities to market Equus to a wider audience. Current strategies were failing to translate into tangible increases in participation, as Kathryn (Centre Manager: Equus) explained:

> "Marketing is something we have tried. As a charity we have "mentors" [Board members] who will provide free advice. We have a brand, it goes on the letterheads, website, the staff clothing, everything. We originally designed these [points to bundles of leaflets] to go to houses in the area based on the company's advice, but eventually I pulled the plug as the response was negligible. So now these are going to schools to see if we can get them interested"

Clearly, procedures are in place to promote Equus more broadly—the development of a "brand" and seeking advice are evidence of good business practice, a feature reportedly lacking within the industry and a factor linked to the decline of riding centres (Bacon, 2002b, 2005). But despite adopting a business approach, Equus suffers from an inability to attract, engage, and retain some participants and staff. A key issue surrounding the lack of adequate business acumen to make riding centres profitable was expressed by an instructor:

> "I think one thing I've noticed about horse people we are a very strange breed, as you know we're very knowledgeable on horses and how to be around them and stable management, but when it comes to marketing and business we're not so good at that. I think it's very difficult to find a horse person who is a very good people person and also a very good marketing person, it's all about the horse"
>
> (Nicole, freelance instructor: Equus)

In 2003/4 Equus was promoted on local television through a series which raised its profile in the immediate area. But a negative result of the media coverage was the stigma of catering specifically for children and charitable projects. The physical environment also plays a significant role in attempts to reverse this stigma. First, acquiring horses which will be cost effective, to accommodate both adult and child, beginner to advanced riders. Second, the limited "turn-out"[28] time can result in horses misbehaving in lessons impacting on the rider's experience. Third, advanced riders generally engage in hacking, cross-country riding and some seek competitions; the first two aspects are not possible within an urban riding centre. Finally, horses which acclimatise to the conditions can, over a period of time, become unresponsive to the rider. The yard staff monitor these issues; providing leaders and schooling horses demonstrating signs of

[28] Turn out - refers to time spent away from the stable, usually in a field in rural centres or loose in an arena.

misbehaviour, but ultimately as Kay states, "the horses here must earn their keep and if they are causing problems and people can't ride them, they must go" (Fieldnotes, Kay, Yard Manager: Equus). However, the combination of environmental factors can have a direct impact on current participants, and attracting new ones if the reputation of "unsafe" horses is perpetuated and the facilities cannot accommodate advanced riders' requirements. This is despite the positive features of Equus; the community atmosphere, groups and clubs to attend, well-maintained stables, tack and horses, qualified instructors, and the riding arenas; one equipped with mirrors to observe riding position.

For the more traditional riding centres, marketing and attracting constant streams of new participants is felt to be equally challenging for grassroots equestrianism although, some success has emerged:

> "Although the councils have money available to fund "summer" activities for underprivileged children it comes to the centre indirectly from the youth clubs, etc. This means the income is intermittent…also these schemes only tend to happen if a member of staff at the council, school or charity is interested in riding and horses, plus remembering to actually contact the stables in the first place! The money is there for the centre to access but it is difficult when you are unaware of its existence"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

This passage infers that marketing opportunities would be enhanced if Hengst were privy to information from council representatives or policy officers regarding possible funding opportunities. At present such schemes appear contingent upon street-level bureaucrats who happen to have an equestrian interest. This concurred with Equus' experience "we try and get into schools, but funding is always the stumbling block, if the teachers like horses then usually they will come, if not it probably won't happen, which is a pity" (Eva instructor: Equus). This point was confirmed by a teacher accompanying a group:

> "It is really difficult to produce outcomes on how much they have benefited from this course and that makes it difficult to secure further funding from the school.

> But as you saw they tend to like the physical work, it keeps them occupied as they tend to mess around when they have nothing physical to do"
>
> (Field notes, Steph, G2L: Equus)

This example offers an illustration that in some instances schools are required to produce statistical outcome measurements of improvement to warrant further funding. However, the horse industry has identified this form of equine course as a means to increase participation in riding centres, as the Horse Strategy states:

> "The horse industry needs to develop its potential in the social, educational and health fields not only because it has so much to offer but also because of…Government priorities and, as such, attract funding which can have a knock-on beneficial effect on the industry. A struggling riding school, for example, with spare capacity in midweek could benefit financially from participation in a social, educational or health project as well as contributing significantly to the well-being of its local community."
>
> (BHIC, 2005: 35)

From the evidence, the issue of securing this funding is a vicious circle, who to approach within schools and councils and producing adequate data to support further funding applications. In addition, as the teacher in this example makes clear, the reported benefits from riding are qualitative in nature and to secure future funding for similar courses, the school requires statistical outcomes or evidence to validate that the course produced an effect on pupils behaviour (Lessick *et al.*, 2004 , Pauw, 2000).

To gain assistance Hengst reported that Business Link had been approached. Business Link is a government funded programme providing free business advice and information through local advisers, on-line data and business specialists (see Business Link, 2009). Claire commented on the provision:

> "They have been pretty good I suppose, we got a few hints off the website, but the advisers won't come out here to see what funds and things could apply to the business and opening riding up to more individuals…nobody supports the

> business. There is still the label that the sport is elite and this causes a barrier in itself"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

Word of mouth was also the main communication method adopted by Cavallo to increase participation: "Marketing? It's not my strong point I must admit…the people who want to ride always find us anyway, as we are the only place around here really…But that is not a good attitude really, is it?" (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo). Isla does advertise forthcoming events in the equestrian section of a local newspaper however, as Brian (free-lance instructor) commented, "the numbers would have been far better [for the event], if the ad had gone in a bit earlier. She's a good friend, but hopeless at organising things on time". From these examples the criticisms Bacon (2002, 2005) offered are to an extent supported as a lack of business acumen amongst proprietors can influence increasing participation and profit generation. In terms of retaining participants once they have started riding, Shannon (Yard Manager: Hengst) felt that this was dependent on the type of rider:

> "Generally, they seem to stay with it and go onto buy horses which, is how it should be really. There are some that grow out of it and you lose them, but the others tend to get horses or horses on loan, you tend to see them through so it is good in that way, you are not losing them for some other reason"

Hengst attracts and retains the above type of participant by word of mouth; "I came riding with friends and it went from there" (Field notes, Ruth, livery: Hengst). And, Hengst's location on a main road close to housing also attracts local participants, "it was very close to home" and this was a central element in the selection of where to ride for the majority of regular participants across all sites (Sophie, participant: Hengst). Shannon described how a rider can become more involved in equestrianism:

> "After a few lessons you start to get to know the rider and their riding ability, so we tell them what lessons, courses and camps are available. If they are kids it's usually the pony or weekend clubs as they always want to be with the horses

> and that way they can learn about them [horses] too…advanced or adult riders usually want the more specific stuff, so we have clinics and events for them"
>
> (Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst)

The process of increasing participation is an inherently dynamic one, which includes progressing existing riders towards greater level and forms of participation as their skill levels improve. It is possible that interests evolve and change as participation increases, where values become firmer for example. In this event, a communication strategy across more and less engaged stakeholders will need to be customised if the Horse Strategy is to be implemented. This links to the CLEAR Framework recommendation of holding forums to increase engagement with a target group such as grassroots equestrians. Forum events could be promoted at the clinics and events Shannon refers to in the above extract. This would enable equine organisations to start the process of engaging grassroots equestrians by attending their events, rather than placing the onus on equestrians to attend BHS organised events and become a members. The important factor for engagement in the CLEAR Framework is adoption of a "bottom-up" approach to implementation by shifting the focus away from the BHS to understand what grassroots equestrians think about the BHS and what improvements to membership they would like to see developed (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a: 285)

Returning to how greater participation and engagement can be achieved, Fohlen made use of a series of marketing strategies i) registered on the BHS approved centre on-line directory, ii) advertise in local papers, iii) British Eventing competitions promoted on-line (BE main website) and, iv) riding holidays appear in equine magazines and on Fohlen's website. Fohlen does not approach schools, charities or youth centres because of Fiona's preference for adult participants. However, there were connections to the local University as Scarlet explained, "the A and B teams for BUSA[29] train and hold their competitions here with rival universities…the university leisure riders also come here too" (Field

[29] Now British Universities and College Sport (BUCS).

notes, Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen). With regard to funding, Fohlen was different from the other sites:

> "Funding? Oh, Fiona is 'old money' I think she would see it as an insult to have to look for funding, although if it was offered she probably would take it. She doesn't have a clue about wages, if it's something for the horses that's a different matter, but she lives in her own little world in her 'country' house, but she definitely has enough money to run this place. I speculate we are in profit at the moment…but there are quiet times…But funding, no that's something that just wouldn't happen around here"
>
> (Field notes, Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen)

This extract highlights the major difference between Fohlen and the other commercial riding centres in this study, in relation to the economic resources of the proprietor. Whilst the need for profit remains the emphasis is once more on prioritising the welfare of the horse over staffing costs. Furthermore, Scarlet suggests that funding would benefit Fohlen, but implied that Fiona's social class—'old money'—restricts proactively-seeking support for increasing participation through funding streams as the other sites demonstrated.

An entirely different approach to increasing participation occurred at Cavallo. Reflecting Isla's preference for the 'Army' method and opting out of BHS membership, this site emphasised that the horses and equestrians enjoy the experience. Amber felt, "once they find us, they tend to stay, it's like a big family atmosphere here everybody helps each other out" (Amber, Head Girl: Cavallo). Horses are quickly introduced to the riders:

> "As we are taking them to get their horse, we usually get to know their first name and then will introduce them to anyone who's on the yard so they start to get to know us. At the box [stable] we get them in and patting the horse so they feel comfy with the horse from the word go…after a few lessons you can see them [participant] starting to learn what the bits of tack are and asking questions, before you know it they are grooming and tacking up"
>
> (Field notes, Richard, Groom: Cavallo)

Richard's example shows that at Cavallo, the rider quickly becomes socially included and encouraged to be "hands on" with the horses from the outset of participation. This approach towards social inclusion between new riders and the riding centre helps enhance the development of becoming part of equestrianism by use of common interests and a language to communicate those interests – to create the 'hook' or bond with a horse. One might think of this as socialisation and community integration as a form of induction into the horse-world, which raises the risks of inertia to ideas or policies that do not speak to these shared interests. Vested interests at grassroots level may then grow unintentionally. This in turn may generate conditions that facilitate support or generate resistance to the implementation of the Horse Strategy and the development of a horse-industry as each interest group is unwilling to yield its position (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , Prottas, 1978). The underlying issue then is one of interest alignment.

Iona discussed Clara and Elisa's progress to their current riding levels as follows:

> They are like many of the girls who ride here, they are enthusiastic and love the ponies, I know they come up to feed them "tit-bits" and they cuddle their ponies in the lessons whenever they get the chance, which I always encourage, as the ponies work hard…I would say that Clara is a bit softer with the horses than Elisa who seems to get them moving forward and is not afraid to use the whip, when told to do so. Clara is afraid she will end up hurting them, but I keep telling her that the whip if used correctly will not hurt the pony and that she has to get a bit tougher by shortening her reins and using her legs more firmly or they won't listen to her.
>
> (Field notes, Iona, instructor: Cavallo)

This example reveals that the bond between horse and rider remains central to retaining participation and the atmosphere generated on the yard:

> "It is not as stringently regulated as other yards, it's not BHS approved because you would have "your horse tacked and brought to you", you were not allowed to have any contact or rapport with the horse. At the end of your ride, you were not allowed in the stable with the horse and un-tack, etc. Since buying my own horses and coming here I can ride other horses and one of mine is used on a

> part-livery basis, which is good. I have noticed that it is "hands on" Isla (proprietor) allows the riders to get as involved as they want, mucking out, grooming, tacking, etc. All this is a much more rounded experience of riding than at yards where the BHS standards are rigidly enforced"
>
> (Trish, Livery: Cavallo)

The discussion has revealed that grassroots equestrianism is struggling to remain profitable, and proprietors and staff felt that equine organisations and BHIC and Defra do little to assist. This generates a separation of interest and growing distrust between and among grassroots equestrians and equine organisations. At a more micro-level, greater socialisation appears to be taking place among grassroots proprietors, staff and riders. A similar strategy seems necessary at the BEF RDC and BHS RDO regional level so that a unified vision, language and interests emerge—the conscious complex systems are required to adapt in this respect (Geyer and Rihani, 2010). In turn, this approach can in time help alleviate uncertainties and the problems caused by the complexity of the horse-world (Hill and Hupe, 2009).

The following discussion details ideas from grassroots proprietors, staff and participants which they feel would allow equestrianism to be more accessible.

6.9.2 Support for businesses

A unanimous starting point involves the issue of business support from the industry, regional representatives (equine organisations) and councils to address overheads, insurance, liability and the elitist label attached to equestrianism from regional representatives (equine organisations):

> "The BHS are a good organisation but they fail to have local officers who liaise with the small riding businesses in the NE. This results in feeling isolated and just visited annually to be "slapped" by the BHS compared to the more abundant riding areas in Yorkshire and the South. Nobody within the industry seems to be there to talk too or provide support for the businesses in the NE region"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

> "We tried going to the British Riding Club events and taking some of the kids on the school horses, but the women from more affluent backgrounds didn't approve and it was obvious we weren't welcome!"
>
> (Claire, Proprietor: Hengst)

> "People come in and don't commit to stay with riding, as we are competing with other activities, the dance lessons, football, tennis etc., which are far cheaper than we are, nothing comes close to the costs of riding, even at our subsidised rates. Fair enough most people balance it, say a community group will say it's £100 to go riding, we'll have this session and we will go to the beach to save money, but that means they will only come here once whereas they will go to swimming every week… This is the difficulty, how do I from a riding centre get in touch with the right person in the Civic Centre? Surely I thought I could send one email and they would tell everybody, how hard can that be, just somebody who would disseminate information?"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

> "We are competing with other leisure pursuits and also the compensation culture, we were just talking about it this morning, even in schools they are getting claims made against teachers. What we need is structured support from the industry and not just for affiliated centres either…we need help if we are to encourage people to participate in what is essentially an expensive risky sport"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

Another area to address for proprietors across the sites was attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff:

> "Riding centres provide the skilled breeding ground for grooms and probable stable hands that move on to work in the racing industry and some do really well we have had a few here including one male actually! I believe without riding centres, the industry wouldn't exist as my clients develop an interest, buy horse related items, may buy low level horses and go to see events, nobody comes to support riding centres and that's the kind of support that's really lacking!"
>
> (Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen)

> "They know they can go somewhere else especially if they are only working once a week, they call up and say "my horse is sick I can't come in" you could be cross with them, but you know if you are they are not going to work for the rest of the year for you especially if they are a good earner. Some of the instructor's you have to learn to live with their faults from a purely selfish business point of view, if they bring the money in. I'm trying to get that through to some of the staff who

> have issues, I say "I know you hate them but they are good earners and do a good job when they are here"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

The points expressed here are linked to earlier discussions (sections 6.5.2) where working in riding centres was described by grassroots staff as an unattractive, low-paid, low status occupation. This leads to the problem of "human capital" how to attract and retain qualified staff and adds to the BHIC and Defra's wicked problem of implementing the Horse Strategy to develop a horse-industry (Becker, 1975). Uncertainty and resource constraints apply to both the supply-side and demand-side of participation in grassroots equestrianism. On the one hand, individuals are motivated to participate but face access constraints as some riding centres are working to capacity. On the other hand, the riding centres themselves are constrained by the lack of suitable staff and where the next generation of equestrian staff will emerge from given the negative perceptions of the occupation. From the staff point of view once they become qualified, there is little prospect of professional development:

> "I have my intermediate horse manager's certificate but to get training to go one further, I would have to travel to the Yorkshire or Cumbria. It just worries me that there's nothing really in this area to encourage a new generation into instructing when there is a great deal of travelling involved in order to get the qualifications. For my exam place I would have to drive down South every weekend to complete a course that I want to do, I do have my own horses but I do not have a show jumper and therefore I don't know how to get access to somebody who had a show jumper in order to meet the expectations of the course and pass it. So you have to be extremely motivated and have the time, resources and finances in order to do this, many do not. The North East area only qualifies up to AI level and to get higher you have to travel, so instructors don't bother, they are qualified to AI and that's it they don't take the qualifications further. This I think is due to not having the opportunity to go any further and study to a higher level of instruction"
>
> (Nicole, freelance instructor: Equus)

> "The BHS do not check these people who start teaching in livery yards. They are not qualified or insured and I am paying £350 a year are to be covered, I have to have separate insurance for my freelance work"
>
> (Iona, freelance instructor: Cavallo)

These extracts show that instructors who do invest in the BHS system and comply with industry standards are being undermined by unregulated instructors and their suggestions reflect that of the local authority policy officers, who put forward plans to develop an official register of equine businesses and staff to improve standards in equestrianism.

An additional area to ensure that the 'right' increase in participation occurs was expressed by proprietors and staff as the introduction of a 'test' before individuals can own horses. These concerns echo those of the BHS RDOs:

> "This is a bigger area where new horse owners fall foul of the system because they have no idea of what is right and what is wrong. Kids have mummies and daddies who just take the word of the most experienced person around them [on livery yards] and their advice may not be true"
>
> (Amber, Head Girl: Cavallo)

> "Access to the horse is much easier now, I think it is less elitist because you can pay £15 an hour to have a lesson, you can find cheap livery and I can't quite put my finger on it, but it just is easier to have access to a horse. Lots of people are backing away from riding centres and going into the new livery yards because some livery yards will charge you only £15 to put your horse in the field per week, and a lot of new horse owners are doing this. They can buy a horse for about £500 it is not an extortionate amount…I feel people should not be able to buy a horse unless they have a horse master's certificate even at a basic level this should be a prerequisite, because anybody can go out now and buy a horse relatively cheaply"
>
> (Scarlet, Head Girl: Fohlen)

Moreover, to improve all round knowledge of equestrianism, the strongest recommendation was to increase access to riding through the schools' curriculum. This reflects the system operating in Germany (Richards, 2006):

> "Make riding part of education as a form of exercise and utilise "after school/college" clubs at riding centres. This would mean an investment in buildings in riding centres so that they could accommodate the students… Horses need to be pushed as friends and working together to enjoy riding and not blaming the horse when it goes wrong. It all takes investment and communicating with the schools is the way forward. The councils and

> everybody should be involved so that linking education and riding can happen throughout the country and not just link with the bigger centres"
>
> (Isla, Proprietor: Cavallo)

> "I have approached local councils and authorities stating the benefits of the courses and providing case studies of success stories of kids developing an interest and moving to a career in equestrianism. But I have to say, there's been little interest, some schools respond others don't, so perhaps this is where the industry could offer some support in accessing funding to promote such schemes and advise other riding centres how they could follow our example, I would be more than willing to share our experiences"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

> "Yes, the problem I see is with sustainable funding, you may get short-term funding to put these plans into action for 3 years, but to get sustainable funding to develop the industry I don't know where that would come from…We tried to get into the schools, you know when schools went vocational and everybody wanted to do vocational we put a programme together we were really keen. We had all done GCSE level and would have loved to see it in the schools and given something back and done it that way, but it was "no, can't do it"…The BHS are also trying to make the Stage 3 in line with an A level, so maybe they are coming more in line with the educational system whatever. It would have been a step forward"
>
> (Shannon, Yard Manager: Hengst)

From these extracts a recurring issue is support for building links with schools and the provision of sustainable funding. In chapter five, the BEF RDC gave examples of how progress in this area had been made through partnership with Sport England. However, it also illustrated that the vested interests of the organisations were preserved by selecting only approved riding centres that would necessarily meet the outcome targets set by Sport England for participation. In addition, at the time of writing the scheme was in the process of being 'rolled-out' across grassroots riding centres in the North East of England and the planned hand-over to the BHS/ABRS to manage the schools initiative served to maintain the BEFs position of power over resources (funding) and decisions on which riding centres were put forward for the bids in the first instance (Alford and Friedland, 1975). The issue of funding also links to the lobbying power of grassroots equestrianism relative to the power of other

groups approaching government and policy makers for support, such as farmers. Equestrianism could raise its profile to counteract issues of market failure and broaden the appeal of riding to the wider public through the schools system. One funding opportunity is to feed into the government's and Sport England's ambitions to increase female participation in physical activities (Department of Health., 2004 , Sport England., 2008). The high proportion of female participants in equestrianism speaks to this agenda as equestrianism is also reported as the sixth most popular physical activity for women (Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation., 2011).

A further observation and recommendation to increase participation in equestrianism and broaden its appeal to the general public came from the centre manager of Equus:

> "It would be amazing to watch top riders every month, wouldn't it? But it doesn't happen, when I was young it used to be on the telly, you could go home and watch the HOYS [Horse of the Year Show] and all my friends used to rush from school to watch it as well, it's not on ordinary telly now. It used to be on about 5pm and sometimes if you were lucky you were allowed to stay up for the 9.30pm show! Horses are more popular than football, but they are obviously not as accessible, more TV coverage would help. People will argue whether they are interested but they have probably never been in contact with a horse before. Imagine if the industry was like football having an event that you could go to every month to see professionals perform, it would be fantastic, £20 each it may not be open to all, but it would be fantastic"
>
> (Kathryn, Centre Manager: Equus)

This aspiration for equestrianism to broaden its appeal is not implausible when looking at Deloitte's report for the British Horseracing Authority (BHA, 2009). This report demonstrated that behind football, 5.9m people annually attend race meets across the UK (BHA, 2009: 44). Looking at the aggregated attendance figures (events running over several days) for the top ten sporting events equestrianism occupies five out of the ten; Royal Ascot (288,000), Badminton Horse Trials (200,000), Cheltenham Festival (178,000), the Derby (160,000) and Grand National (145,000). From these figures Badminton Horse Trials stand out

as an event outside horseracing and hold 5th position in the rankings. This suggests that there are numerous grassroots equestrians attending such events and this provides a survey or forum opportunity to canvas opinion on the Horse Strategy and how best to develop an industry (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a).

Finally, from the grassroots participant perspective two key recommendations to increase participation were associated with the issue of resource constraints; reducing cost and increased access to facilities:

> "If it could be made cheaper, then Adele would definitely be able to ride more often and I know she wants to do that"
>
> (Field notes, Adele's mother: Hengst)

> "There's not that many good riding centres around here. We came here after two recently closed, so cost and being able to actually ride would be helpful in my opinion"
>
> (Field notes, Thomas' mother: Fohlen)

Box 6.9 below summarises the main perspective and insights from grassroots proprietors, staff and riders presented in this chapter. These address the two central challenges of i) increasing participation in equestrianism and ii) engaging grassroots stakeholders with the aims of the Strategy and creating the necessary communication networks to achieve the envisaged transformation to a Horse Industry (BHIC, 2005).

Box 6.9: Critical insights for increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy

Proprietors, staff and participants:

- Provide clear information and knowledge about the objectives and aims of the Horse Strategy and how it can assist grassroots equestrianism
- Develop communication networks between the equine organisations and grassroots riding centres, staff and riders
- Develop communication networks with councils to illustrate the benefits of riding and one contact can disseminate the information council wide
- Assist in reversing the compensation culture as riding is a risk activity
- Assist in the training and retention of staff – review wage structure, career progression pathways and use effective marketing strategies
- Equine organisations should provide more support to riding centres rather than criticising practice
- Address business rates applied to riding centre buildings and overhead liabilities – reducing profits and increase the likelihood of closure
- Overheads (economics); liability, insurance, litigation, planning permission for indoor schools and expansion combined with health and safety legislation are the main barriers to business growth
- Reduce the cost of participation (lessons, equipment)
- Increase the number of riding centres
- Train horses prior to introducing them to novice riders to reduce the level of nerves
- Create a transparent and easier funding system managed between the BEF and councils to increase access to riding
- Make riding part of the schools/colleges physical education curriculum – this would lead to more funding to invest in developing riding centres
- Invests in council run riding centres (e.g. Milton Keynes complex of Ebony urban riding centre, Brixton, London)
- Increase television coverage (mainstream) – in the UK football has the most coverage
- Protect qualified instructors
- Regulate ownership to reduce horse welfare cases
- Regulate farmers diversifying into equestrianism

6.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the four research questions of this thesis within grassroots equestrianism. In terms of what motivates individual participation, a key factor emerged as the 'hook' or bond of interaction with a horse. This finding will come as little surprise to those involved with horses. However, it is a unique feature of equestrianism, which sets this group of activities apart from other sporting activities such as cycling and swimming. The findings show support for the Framework for Sport model in reiterating the majority of factors influencing an individual's choice to participate in equestrianism (Sport England., 2004b). However, it became apparent throughout the analysis that factors influencing an individual's choice to participate are interrelated and can build synergistically on each other to markedly increase an individual's participation. However, it was also found that increases in participation are dependent on resolving resourcing, cost, and infrastructure limitations among both horse riding centres and grassroots equestrians. Specifically, the industry has a dysfunctional labour market that relies on throughput from participants themselves becoming motivated to work in the industry. Moreover, the horse riding centres themselves have limited scope for expansion owing to land and infrastructure constraints. The overarching problem then is that even if vested interests could be mitigated and a social dialogue among stakeholders unites them behind a vision for a horse industry, the ability to accommodate growth in participation remains problematic.

The levels of awareness and engagement with the Horse Strategy were explored, given the backdrop of acknowledged issues such as fragmentation and inadequate communication networks. Indeed, the Horse Strategy appears to be unknown to most grassroots equestrians. While knowledge of the Horse Strategy within local authority policy officers and regional representatives (equine organisations) exists, there remains the issue of closer collaboration to implement aspects of the Strategy. From the proprietors' perspective, central barriers to increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the

Strategy emerged. The examples offered suggest that riding centres are struggling to remain profitable particularly following the economic crisis of 2008. Overheads and liabilities combined with the effects of harsh winters (2009-2010) are exacerbated by biases at the policy, council and government levels about wealth and elitism in the horse world as well as by the lobbying power of other external groups (such as cyclists) with their own vested interests. The stakeholders of the horse industry must therefore find ways to best communicate their perspective and this may come from leveraging the interests and responsibilities of policy makers. It should also be noted that the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) showed that if the Horse Strategy is to meet the needs of grassroots equestrians then a viable method is to proactively engage of a range of grassroots equestrians. Selecting approved riding centres and customers deemed of standard to gain Sport England funding creates a bias towards the potential offered from non-approved centres (e.g. Cavallo).

The findings of this thesis have important implications for the Horse Strategy or subsequent strategies attempting to engage a range of socially complex actors. The call for equestrians and proprietors to take the Strategy forward and not to procrastinate if it fails is flawed (BHIC, 2005: 8). This approach does not acknowledge that top-down policy implementation is outdated and overly simplistic when dealing with conscious complex systems and the result is a complex wicked policy problem. Attention has been given to show how a combination of issues resulting from vested structural interests, power, street-level bureaucracy and complexity (fragmentation) within grassroots equestrianism blocks implementation. For BHIC and Defra, regional representatives and local authority policy officers, the message is clear. To manage this policy problem, open collaboration and inclusion of stakeholders is required. The policy officers have begun this process in forming partnerships in the region and if the industry can follow this example while adopting the CLEAR Framework approach where equestrians will feel responded too, implementation is possible. Without a collaborative approach to manage the policy problem and acknowledge resource constraints, then fragmentation will

continue at grassroots level as no alternative is known or offered and the likelihood of a unified horse-industry will remain a 'vision'.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this conclusion, I revisit the aims of the study and provide a summary of the key findings relating to each research question. I identify the original contributions of the thesis before discussing the limitations of the study. I go on to make recommendations for industry leaders, regional representatives (equine organisations), local authority policy officers and grassroots proprietors in relation to the implementation of public policy set out in the Horse Strategy, and outline areas for future research.

The vision of the Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales is to transform the established horse-world into the leisure-sector of a wider "robust and sustainable horse industry" (BHIC, 2005: 10). Central to this objective is the focus upon engaging all equestrians from "recreational riders" and "owners" to those "enthusiasts who are not engaged in these pursuits full-time" (BHIC, 2005: 10). Official (HCR, 2004) and local-level equestrian research (DCC, 2003 , DCC and LAF, 2009) suggests that this group of equestrians are notoriously difficult to identify and contact, let alone engage in the policy process. The implication of these findings bring into question the Horse Strategy's reliance upon the implicit engagement of equestrians within grassroots equestrianism to ensure full implementation of the Horse Strategy (BHIC, 2005: 6). Simply put, if grassroots equestrians are not engaged with the Horse Strategy's vision and aims, then the envisaged transformation into a horse industry is significantly compromised. Taking this central premise of participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy as underpinning successful policy implementation, the aims of the study were to shed light on: why individuals participate in grassroots equestrianism, barriers to participation, awareness of the Horse Strategy among grassroots equestrians and ways of facilitating engagement with the Strategy. Informed by a review of the literature on participation in equestrianism (chapter two) and engagement with policy (chapter three) I addressed the following research questions that shaped the empirical focus of the thesis:

1. What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?
2. What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?
3. To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?
4. How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

The following section provides a summary of the findings relating to each of these questions.

7.2 Summary of research findings

7.2.1 What motivates individual participation in grassroots equestrianism?

The motivations of diverse equestrians (proprietors and staff of riding centres, individual riders and supporters) were both varied, yet strikingly similar in one unique respect. Familiarity with equestrianism within the family was one clear influence on participation while a specific television programme in one site, drew in new riders, particularly children. Linking these findings on motivation to the drivers, settings and policy areas for change encapsulated by the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b), I found that gender, age and income were important factors in patterns of equestrianism. Riders were predominantly female in riding centres/schools. Age was linked with riding in interesting ways with childhood, adolescence and young adulthood being most closely associated with participation. This is followed by a dip in participation between 21 and 35 years, explained by lifestyle shifts linked to family commitments and re-engagement from the mid-thirties onwards. Factors here included greater disposable income and the draw of joint leisure activities particularly between mothers and daughters. Income was important in informing an individual's frequency and level of participation as a rider, yet the picture here is not entirely straightforward. While frequency of riding appeared to be influenced by financial ability, the 'level' of participation from 'happy hacking,' to lessons in riding centres, through to competitive participation was only partly informed by income. Some high income horse owners did not aspire to competitive participation while many individuals demonstrating talent as competitive equestrians, lacked the financial means to participate in the

exclusive, and arguably exclusionary, world of competitive equestrianism which focuses on the Olympic disciplines of dressage, show jumping and three-day eventing.

Overwhelmingly, the unique draw to participation in equestrianism was the opportunity for interaction with horses. The physicality of riding, the opportunity to engage with horses, and the prospect of developing a "partnership" formed the 'hook' for most equestrians (Wipper, 2000). Even the more nervous and leisure-oriented equestrians in this study described their participation as being importantly connected to the idea of such a partnership, which was only possible to develop by being with a horse (Latimer and Birke, 2009). It was apparent that symbolic items such as the horse itself and common interests surrounding the horse elevated participation among stakeholders.

7.2.2 What are the barriers to participation in grassroots equestrianism?

Each group of stakeholders envisaged as being involved in the implementation process of the Horse Strategy offered insights into the barriers that prevent greater participation in equestrianism. For the local authority policy officers, major barriers included: i) the elitist reputation associated with horses that led to challenges in gaining support among superiors to improve facilities, and ii) poor communication networks and lack of collaborative partnerships with regional representatives of equine organisations and grassroots equestrians. For the regional representatives of equine organisations, barriers to participation in equestrianism were intertwined with challenges in increasing engagement with the Horse Strategy. They identified i) resource constraints and the breadth of their roles, and ii) fragmented communication networks with local councils and grassroots equestrians, as limiting the impact they could have in generating interest and participation in grassroots equestrianism. Grassroots equestrians (riding centre proprietors, staff, riders and supporters) while clearly involved themselves, identified i) challenges in covering the costs of overheads, liability insurance, infrastructure and staffing as restricting the growth of riding centres, ii) a lack of communication networks with local councils and with regional representatives of equine bodies as limiting opportunities to promote

equestrianism, and iii) a lack of subsidies to encourage a wider spectrum of rider participation.

The nature of these barriers represent structural, resource and communication constraints harming both the potential for increased participation and the realisation of that potential across all stakeholders. Part of resolving these barriers also rest in resolving the vested interests held by each stakeholder group as even when structural and resource constraints are mitigated, communication and a suitable dialogue is unlikely unless a common platform of interests can be established.

7.2.3 To what extent are grassroots equestrians i) aware of and ii) engaged with the Horse Strategy?

Findings in relation to this research question yielded a gloomy picture for advocates of the Horse Strategy. Participants in this research showed little or no awareness of the Strategy and negligible engagement with it among those who were aware. This lack of awareness and poor levels of engagement contribute to the constitution of a complex wicked policy problem for industry leaders and local-level policy implementers (Rittel and Webber, 1973). The CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a)—a diagnostic tool to aid identification of strengths and problems with engagement at local-level based on i) having the resources and knowledge to engage; ii) a sense of attachment that reinforces engagement; iii) opportunities for engagement; iv) mobilisation by official bodies or voluntary groups, and v) visible evidence of individuals' views having been considered—was useful in developing a deeper understanding of the evident ineffectiveness of the Horse Strategy. The lack of knowledge about the Strategy undermined the likelihood of engagement. But beyond this, engagement was further inhibited by resource constraints, weak attachment to the aims of the Strategy, and little evidence of mobilisation by equine organisations whose efforts were focused on elite equestrianism. Weak attachment stemmed from a clear disparity in interests among stakeholder groups. While some basis for common interest was noted in terms of the symbolic nature of the horse or on-going public narratives relevant to the horse-world, the fact that interests were

heavily vested in each stakeholder group creates substantial difficulty in rapidly changing this situation. There is still a long way to go before the policy rhetoric of transforming the horse-world into a horse industry can become a reality.

7.2.4 How can greater engagement with the Horse Strategy be achieved?

An understanding of this question is related to each of the previous three questions that identify factors that motivate and constrain engagement in equestrianism and constrain awareness of the Horse Strategy. In identifying this area of policy as a 'complex wicked problem' defying resolution I have identified two specific areas of uncertainty that characterise wicked problems: strategic uncertainty, associated with a multiplicity of actors and institutional uncertainty, associated with fragmented decision-making (van Bueren *et al.*, 2003: 193-4).

Each group of actors, or stakeholders, had suggestions for increasing participation in *equestrianism*, but this is a necessary but insufficient condition for increasing engagement with the *Horse Strategy*. They also offered additional insights into what, they argue, is required to achieve meaningful engagement with the Strategy.

The lack of communication networks among grassroots equestrians, representatives of equine organisations and local authority policy officers is one key area for attention, but it seems unlikely that this in itself could overcome what is seen by all stakeholders as a mismatch between the central interest of grassroots equestrians in horses *per se* (the human-horse relationship) and the central economic interest of policy makers in creating a 'horse industry'.

One challenge then, for achieving greater participation in the strategy, is recognition of this mismatch and accommodation on the part of policy makers and political decision-makers to address the difficulties experienced by riding school proprietors in managing the cost-raising factors associated with equestrianism, such as overheads, insurance, liability and staffing issues, to support business growth and profitability. For the Horse Strategy to have a chance of successful implementation, regulation (which has a useful role to play

in relation to health and safety of animals and riders) should be accompanied by incentives to align interests. Stakeholders also identified the need to: i) establish and resource necessary communication networks, incorporating an official register of equestrian businesses, and ii) actively encourage collaborative partnerships between local authority policy officers, regional representatives of equine organisations and grassroots equestrians. As well as facilitating a joined up approach to addressing general issues of common concern such as the breadth, diversity of stakeholders, and contested boundaries of the policy, a joined up approach could focus attention on the development of specific challenges. For example, regional representatives (equine organisations) could usefully disseminate information about the Horse Strategy and what it means for grassroots equestrianism (raising awareness), schools could include equestrianism as part of their sport curriculum and joint effort could be invested in enabling an infrastructure capable of absorbing and accommodating growth in participation.

7.3 Original contributions to knowledge

7.3.1 Equestrian Participation

This study makes a contribution to knowledge through our understanding of the factors of that influences individuals to participate in equestrianism. Using the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) I was able to explain the factors associated with equestrian participation. These included: age factors (riders tended to be aged under 21 or over age 35), parental influence (previous engagement in riding) and income (facilitating participation) factors. Gender was also a factor influencing grassroots equestrian participation with over 90% of participants being female.

Increasing equestrian participation is particularly complex. The horse-world consists of a range of socially complex actors whose motivation, willingness and ability to participate are broad. This explains why top-down policy implementation cannot adequately address the problem of increasing participation or the levels and types of engagement. A combination of issues

linked to vested structural interests, power, street-level bureaucracy and complexity (fragmentation) within grassroots equestrianism further blocks implementation by increasing barriers to participation even when income and cost challenges are compensated for. More open collaboration and inclusion of stakeholders is required but it has to be based on a common interest platform, symbolism, common language and incentives. At times, stakeholders rotate between being professional monopolisers controlling the ability to engage in equestrianism versus rationalisers trying to make sense of policy to enable participation among the target community (Alford and Friedland, 1975 , North, 1995). Breaking down such complexity by resolving interest heterogeneity can go some way towards addressing the disconnection between monopolisers (BEF), rationalisers (BHS) and the community (grassroots equestrians) in the horse-world to help create the horse industry.

A key theme was the 'hook' or bond created as a result of interaction between the individual and a horse. This is a unique feature of equestrianism. Factors influencing an individual's choice to participate are interrelated and build synergistically on each other to increase an individual's participation. However, even if a shared language can be established around the icon of the horse to elevate participation, fundamental problems remain in the forms of resourcing, cost, and infrastructure limitations among both riding centres and other grassroots equestrians. The industry has a dysfunctional labour market that relies on participants ultimately choosing to graduate into industry workers. Moreover, riding centres have limited scope for expansion owing to land and infrastructure constraints. The overarching problem is that even if vested interests are mitigated and a dialogue among stakeholders unites them behind a vision for a horse industry, the ability to accommodate growth in participation remains problematic.

These insights into the horse-world and the value placed on interaction with a horse provide a platform to facilitate greater participation. The levels of awareness and engagement with the Horse Strategy among the breadth of stakeholders are minimal while biases at the policy making and implementation

levels about wealth and elitism in the horse-world remain strong. The stakeholders of the horse industry must therefore find ways to best communicate their perspective and this may come from leveraging the interests and responsibilities of policy makers. Transcending vested interests into common interests remains a fundamental problem that stakeholders must unpack to make any significant progress in policy implementation.

7.3.2 Wicked problems and Complexity

This study also contributes to understanding policy implementation from a wicked problems and complexity perspectives. Extending Geyer and Rihani's (2010) research, this study contributes to identifying and managing complex wicked policy problems found within policy implementation processes of the scale and duration of the Horse Strategy, primarily demonstrating how to identify and involve the number of socially complex actors in the horse-world.

This study also found that viewing the horse industry in isolation is erroneous as it fails to capture competing interests by external groups whose activities and lobbying might affect the horse-world. For example, policy failures resulting from compensation and diversity payments to farmers during the Foot and Mouth crisis led to equestrian organisations suffering an uneven playing field as actors in the agricultural sector could enter business areas normally within the realm of equestrianism (Crossman and Walsh, 2008 , Turner *et al.*, 2006). Also, access to a greater infrastructure (such as off-road rights of way) was influenced by the actions of lobbyists in cycling and walking fraternities as well as by biases among decision-makers (e.g. perceptions of wealth and elitism). Nevertheless, while considerable intra- and inter-industry complexity exists, solutions can be found from common symbols (intra-industry) or common interest points (inter-industry). Vested interests and the structuring of power exacerbate differences between stakeholders and magnify the effects of structural constraints on particular groups. Addressing the vested interests of groups in direct competition with grassroots equestrians for local resources and decisions (e.g. access rights) demonstrates a need to co-opt local and regional allies (e.g. policy officers) to become street-level bureaucrats in their own right, capable of

affecting strategy implementation. This study then offers a better understanding the nature of the complex wicked problem of policy implementation and shows that its success or failure is not necessarily solely in the hands of direct industry stakeholders.

7.4 Limitations of the study

Despite the contributions to knowledge, this thesis is not without limitations. As a qualitative study, the findings contribute to theoretical understanding regarding grassroots equestrianism, but the generalisability of the findings to the wider grassroots population is limited. Similarly, while inferences can be made from the data regarding apparent relationships and important constructs or factors, however, a quantitative study would be required in order to demonstrate statistically whether these relationships hold to explain which factors significantly influence individuals' decision to participate in equestrianism and the magnitude of the effects of particular barriers.

A further limitation occurs with respect to time. It was found during the study that equestrian interests show some evolution over time and as the nature of participation increases, these interests become more complex. A longitudinal study of equestrian participation would be required (either qualitative or quantitative) to further examine and substantiate this emergent perspective.

Finally, the idea of capturing more data by issuing diary packs to equestrians and following-up on progress was not an entirely successful method. Some interesting insights were elicited, but the overall response rate was low (see chapter four). And, while lessons were learned from distributing the packs in the first two sites, on reflection this method did not elicit meaningful empirical data for this study. An alternative approach could be the collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data and use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin, 1989) to examine the multi-dimensional factors influencing participation in equestrianism.

7.5 Recommendations

In this section, I draw on the findings of the study to make recommendations for the BHIC and Defra (industry leaders), regional representatives (equine organisations), local authority policy officers and riding centre proprietors in relation to implementing policy at local-level. For researchers, I suggest ways to extend this study in relation to examining participation in equestrianism and the challenges of policy implementation involving a diverse set of stakeholders.

7.5.1 Industry leaders, regional representatives, policy officers and proprietors

If equestrian participation is to be increased, the allure of the horse itself could be capitalised on and stronger engagement with equestrians and the public is required. One way would be to break down the barriers created by regional representatives of dealing exclusively with their own members and with approved riding centres. This implies financial investment and given the current economic climate government is unlikely to fund new or additional equestrian schemes. This places an emphasis on building the work started by the local authority policy officers in this study.

A clear message from this study concerns coping with complex wicked policy problems, as once wicked problems are identified they are resilient to resolution and once one problem is addressed another emerges. For example, in addressing access constraints, taster sessions could be provided at riding centres, but a problem of effectively communicating these events to interested parties emerges. This aspect of wicked problems is significant for all stakeholders involved in the implementation process at local-level who must understand and manage a range of diverse problems and complex actors. The following recommendations extend Geyer and Rihani's (2010: 70-71) models for "open-ended" activity of 'managing' wicked problems in complex systems by adopting "soft systems methodology" (SSM) and insights from the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) to provide knowledge about the Horse Strategy to grassroots equestrians and increase engagement with the policy process by:

- Developing communication networks between all stakeholders that allow open exchange of problems rather than restrict discussions, so that the communication process is active, involves continual stakeholder participation and is reiterative in nature to deal with the wicked problems as each one emerges.

- Acknowledging the cost of participation as this affected all equestrians from grassroots through to elite level participants. Linked to the first point, creating reciprocal partnerships amongst stakeholders could provide an opportunity to reduce overheads through co-operation between riding centre proprietors and do more with fewer resources.

- Review the lessons learned from national and local-level equestrian research in order to gain an understanding of the benefits of the horse-industry and what specific impact on stakeholders will it have. Is it required or can a compromise be reached?

- Hold stakeholder forums to discuss the structure of the horse-world and what all stakeholders would envisage as a workable solution to improve equestrianism at grassroots level.

- Raise awareness of how to contact 'happy hackers' building on the work of the local authority policy officers in this study. As part of the iterative management process, other communication methods should be reviewed in addition to those of Tourist Information Centres and Bed and Breakfast outlets in an attempt to reach 'happy hackers' and increase engagement with the Horse Strategy.

- Address the lack of business acumen of stakeholders by linking with local Universities to provide work placements as part of business courses (e.g. MA, MBA, DBA). For example, marketing, economic or business management students could work in partnership with councils, equine organisations and riding centres to develop workable solutions without incurring significant cost.

Nonetheless, these recommendations rely on overcoming the central barrier to progress identified in this study—overcoming the vested interests of each stakeholder group in order to develop a basis for developing efficient communication networks and dialogue between them. The findings outlined in section 7.2 suggest that any new methods to implement the Horse Strategy must in the short-term adopt a bottom-up approach to implementation and take into account the issues of cost, overheads and constraints facing riding centre proprietors and equestrians to increase participation and engagement. In the long-term, the infrastructure problem (where participants are willing to ride and grassroots riding centres are declining due to overhead pressures) must be addressed. Consideration of incentives to encourage engagement with equine organisations may represent a method of starting to rebuild trust throughout the horse-world and overcome the complex wicked problem of creating a horse-industry.

7.5.2 Future Research

Despite this study making a significant contribution to understanding what motivates individuals to participate in equestrianism and the factors which affect engagement with policy at local-level, there is a need for further research. The following sections present research options.

7.5.2.1 Increasing equestrian participation

This study highlighted that interdependent multi-dimensional factors build synergistically to motivate individual equestrian participation. Attempting to change individuals' mindset to engage with local-level policy is equally complex. To explore, identify and accommodate all these factors, a multi-method approach including drawing on tools such as the Framework for Sport (Sport England., 2004b) to further understand factors influencing participation in equestrianism and the CLEAR Framework (Lowndes *et al.*, 2006a) to promote engagement with local-level policy are suggested as part of future research designs.

One recommendation of this study has been the need to create effective communication networks through developing collaborative partnerships

between local authority policy officers, regional representatives and grassroots equestrians. This study has highlighted that at a regional-level some progress has been made in developing communication networks with grassroots equestrians through tourist outlet networks. However, at the time of the study there has been no evaluation of how successful this method was in increasing equestrian participation. Future evaluation of how effective this method is in facilitating greater awareness and engagement with local-level policy would be beneficial in developing and maintaining communication networks to increase participation and engagement across the country. Including grassroots representatives and equestrians in future research is crucial.

7.5.2.2Policy implementation: wicked problems and complexity

This thesis recommended using the combination of wicked problems and complexity theory to assist in identifying and managing policy implementation problems among sets of diverse social actors (conscious complex systems). However, an examination of how effective the combination of these two approaches was for the equestrian context was not possible within this study. Future research could apply this combination of approaches to local-level policy implementation (within equestrianism or other areas), and assess if the recommended reiterative process of reviewing wicked problems (Geyer and Rihani, 2010) as they arise works in practice for implementers and stakeholders.

7.6 Closing comments

Despite its limitations the thesis has made a significant contribution to understanding what motivates individual participation in equestrianism and how to address the complex wicked problem of encouraging grassroots equestrians to engage with policy. Using a multi-site and mixed method approach, the study has provided unique insights into the combination of factors that influence equestrian participation. It has also revealed a clear lack of engagement with the Horse Strategy while demonstrating the problematic issue of policy implementation amongst a large number of diverse stakeholders which

increases social complexity. On the one hand, this study has offered avenues to explore and suggested the combination of collaborative approaches in conjunction with tools to increase participation (Framework for Sport) and engagement (CLEAR Framework). On the other hand, the findings and recommendations come with the caveat that changing the practices and mindset of stakeholders is not to be underestimated. The industry leaders gave themselves ten years to implement the Strategy, but environmental changes, not least in economic terms, have significantly altered most industries and the horse industry is not exempt. Rising overheads and reduced profit margins are of clear concern and, as stated, quick fixes are neither apparent nor a sustainable method of resolving these wicked problems.

Since data collection ended in 2010, a 2013 update provided by BEF Head Office, highlighted several recent developments in relation to the Horse Strategy: i) the role of the BHIC and the Horse Strategy are to be reviewed in terms of being 'fit for purpose' in creating a unified horse-industry, ii) the Hoofit campaigns to increase equestrian participation through improving access to grassroots riding centres are to continue in targeting urban and rural participants, iii) in response to the recent food scandal where horse meat entered the human food chain in the UK (BBC, 2012), the government (Defra and the Animal Welfare Board) are working with the BEF to update the 2007 Equine Health & Welfare Strategy to protect horses and the public health, and finally, iv) the European Union (EU) in response to the horse meat scandal issued a directive stating that each member country must have a database of horses and one single passport issuing agency to prevent further risk to public health. This latter point may indicate that the National Equine Database (NED) closed in 2012 will be reinstated and the numerous passport agencies across the UK merged in order to comply with the new EU directive.

Inaction during this period of austerity may have wide ranging consequences from the opportunities to develop future Olympic team members to the fate of remaining grassroots riding centres.

Appendices

Appendix I: Costs of keeping a Horse or Pony (BHS, 2010)

Regular Costs (Approximate costs only. Local variations will apply)

Livery (per month)	**Feed & Bedding**	**Health Care**
Grass £70 - £150 DIY £110 - £250 Part £240 - £550 Working £280 - £340 Full £300 - £800	Hay £4 - £7 per small bale Haylage £6 - £8 per small bale Horse and pony nuts £8 - £10 per bag Chaf f £10 per bag Bedding – shavings £6.50 – £8 per bale Bedding – straw £2.50 - £3.50 per bale Bedding – wood pellets £2.50 - £4 per bag	Shoeing every 6 – 8 weeks £80 Trimming every 6 – 8 weeks £35 Remedial shoeing every 4 – 6 weeks £120 Worm control – faecal egg count every 10 weeks £8 per test Worm control – blood test (biannually) £60 per test Wormer £15 - £20 per syringe Vaccinations £50 (+ VAT and vet call out fee) Dentistry £40 - £50 Insurance for veterinary fees £200 - £600 per year (considerable variation depending on the animal"s value and intended use)

Occasional Costs (Approximate costs only. Local variations will apply)

Yard and Field Equipment	**Tack, Rugs and Riding Equipment**	**Euthanasia and Carcass Disposal**
Stable/Feeding Equipment (wheelbarrow, fork, broom, feed and water buckets, feed storage bins etc.) £200 Equine First Aid Kit £50 Grooming Kit £25 Field Shelter £2,000 Stable £1500 (£1000 each for additional stables) Barn (including 6 stables) £20,000 Rubber matting £250 - £300 per stable	Turnout Rug £50 - £150 Stable Rug £30 - £80 Leather Saddle £900 - £1,500 Leather Bridle £100 - £150 Riding Clothes £200 Riding Hat £80 - £120 Body Protector £80 - £400 Riding Boots £35 - £100 High Visibility Vest £10	Euthanasia by free bullet £80 (+ VAT and vet call out fee) Euthanasia by lethal injection £100 (+ VAT and vet call out fee) Carcass disposal - hunt kennels £100 - £300 Carcass disposal - individual cremation £500 - £700 Carcass disposal - shared cremation £150 - £450 Carcass disposal - abattoir (including euthanasia by free bullet) £100 - £400 paid to the horse owner
Transport	**Miscellaneous**	
Trailer £1,800 - £7,000 Horse Box £5,000 - £15,000 Additional licence training and testing – contact DVLA for details	Passport £10 - £60 Public Liability Insurance £60 - £70 2 Stage vetting £150 (+ VAT and vet call out fee) 5 Stage vetting £300 (+ VAT and vet call out fee) Microchip £20 - £25 (+ VAT and vet call out fee) Freezemark £50 British Horse Society membership (call 02476 840506 for latest prices) Riding Club membership £20 - £60 Competition entry £10 per class Lesson £30 - £50 per hour	

Appendix II: Action Plan for Horse Strategy March 2007

March 2007

Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales - Action Plan
www.bhic.co.uk

The desired outcome column for this update table has been deleted to allow more space for progress reports

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 1 : To achieve and maintain a satisfactorily high standard of animal welfare throughout the Horse Industry, through successful implementation of the Health and Welfare Strategy for the Horse, Pony and Donkey, and through industry support to dedicated equine welfare organisations	BEVA/BHIC to lead in partnership with Defra The whole Horse Industry has an interest in and responsibility for delivering this responsibility.	Generally high standard of equine welfare, but still some areas need to be addressed, and cases of poor welfare consistently visible.	The Equine Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain was launched at the National Equine Forum in March 2007. The Strategy sets out a vision for equine health and welfare in Britain. Eight Aims support the achievement of the vision, and key health and welfare issues are identified under the Aims. A dedicated website for the strategy is www.equinehealthandwelfarestrategy.co.uk And can also be accessed through the welfare pages of the BHIC website.
Action 2 : Develop a Horse Industry Communications Network - Initiate a programme of regular meetings between the Communications Directors of key industry bodies	BHS (Oliver Wilson) and BEF (Clive Hetherington) to lead, in conjunction with all industry associations	Historically, little communication between key organisations. Actions and announcements are not linked up.	Industry bodies launched an Equine Communications Network in August 2006, bringing together more than 12 organisations, to provide a forum for exchange of information and to improve communication. Defra funded a communications workshop in January 2006, which brought together communications heads from across the industry for a facilitated discussion. A programme of future meetings has been agreed. Work now underway on identifying communication protocol.

1

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 3 : Achieve effective two-way communications – Explore the development of an effective central industry communications function to enhance the communication, public relations and information structure for the industry and promote equestrian issues and participation	BHIC to lead, in conjunction with industry associations – including above communications network (See Action 2)	No central industry communications network or system for communicating with the Horse Industry as a whole	Defra provided start- up funding for BHIC/ strategy website (see www.bhic.co.uk) and an contribution towards running the site for its first year. The website, which hosts the strategy, the action plan and a range of other material, is now receiving good feedback both nationally and from as far afield as the USA and Japan – these countries are now studying how the BHIC model and strategy initiatives could apply to their countries. Through an email news sign-up service, the BHIC is now sending out direct regular email updates to hundreds of people who have signed up directly to this information service.
Action 4 : Develop the Horse Industry's regional influence – Establish an effective regional structure for the industry and develop a productive dialogue with regional bodies, including the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), to promote the industry's interests and build its contribution to regional priorities	BHIC (Cathy McGlynn) to lead, in conjunction with BEF, Government, Local/Regional Government, RDAs and other stakeholders	Horse industry has little regional influence or communication with regional authorities	Defra organised initial discussions between BHIC and three interested RDAs. These positive discussions revealed a number of possible areas of further development, including a place on the land-based business forum in one region, which BETA has accepted on behalf of the wider industry, and an invitation to address the RDA rural network. Defra has shared the Strategy with the eight Regional Rural Affairs Forums and has encouraged them to consider how they might contribute to the further development of the horse industry at a regional level. The East Midlands Forum has shown a particular interest in this issue, and was instrumental in the securing of the significant grant from the Learning and Skills Council mentioned under Action 10 below.

2

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 6 : Promote Local Horse Networks – Work with local authorities and the Local Government Association to develop a framework for the creation of local horse networks where sufficient demand exists	BHIC (Cathy McGlynn) to lead in conjunction with BEF, Government and LGA	There are some good examples of local horse groups, which could be built on, but these are often single issue (generally access-oriented) groups which limits their influence with local authorities	A pilot equestrian network is being developed in the East of England, and an outline plan to promote local horse networks is expected to be agreed by end of 2007
Action 6 : The Role of riding schools - Produce a costed and time limited plan for how riding schools can more effectively maximise their potential (perhaps exploring the possibility for developing riding schools into community riding centres which would act as local 'horse hubs') in both rural and urban locations	BHS (Margaret Linington-Payne) and ABRS (Julian Marczak, to lead in conjunction with BEF (Paul Frost),	Some very professional successful riding schools exist, but many are struggling and do not consider they are given the support they need	The BHS and ABRS are working together to develop a draft plan. Both organisations provide training for riding school proprietors in various aspects of business management. The BEF is also looking at ways of working with riding schools to increase participation in equestrian sports

3

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 7 : Research participation in riding – Research number and location of riders, and public perceptions of equestrianism	BETA (Claire Williams) to lead in conjunction with Defra	Limited current source of information or data on the size, nature and perception of the industry	BETA commissioned research through independent resource to update the National Equestrian Survey 1999, and for an Omnibus Survey. Defra has provided part-funding for the first stage of the research. The Omnibus Survey was published in February 2006. The full report is obtainable from BETA at www.beta-uk.org Full research updating the 1999 BETA National Equestrian Survey was published at the 2006 National Equine Forum and a final version of the structural report was available at the end of July 2006, followed by detailed reports on both the feed and bedding, and footwear and clothing markets.
Action 8 : Contribution to Government Public Service Agreements – Initiate discussions with relevant Government Departments and agencies on how the Horse Industry could help contribute to fulfilling their Public Service Agreements and other social policy targets using evidence from case studies, and further research	BHIC (Graham Cory), in conjunction with BEF (Paul Frost) Defra, Local Government	The Horse Industry is capable of making a significant contribution to social policy objectives, in areas such as education, health, criminal justice and social inclusion, but examples are currently isolated and there is little hard evidence or widespread recognition of this potential	Following publication of the strategy, Defra wrote to relevant Government Departments to draw their attention to the real and potential contributions that the Horse Industry can make to their areas of responsibility. Discussions are continuing. Meanwhile, evidence of the beneficial social effects of riding is being gathered and placed on the BHIC website which is serving as a repository of evidence of industry's contribution. In addition, the BEF has now agreed and put in place a Plan for Participation to increase grass roots participation, while the Riding for the Disabled Association is continuing to develop volunteering communities

4

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 9 : Business benchmarking - Introduce a benchmarking system, to raise standards and performance across all types of equestrian business	BETA (Claire Williams) to lead	Many small businesses unaware of how they are performing relative to others and therefore lacking benchmarking information to assess where there is potential for improvement	BETA has started the process by surveying members on several business indicators in order to show how benchmarking can be utilized to benefit businesses. BETA's survey on turnover and staffing levels was completed in late 2006, and a retail sales index has started. It is hoped that this can then be used to better raise awareness of the benefits of benchmarking to the wider industry.
Action 10 : Business professionalism - Encourage targeted continuing professional development in the workplace for equestrian managers, and make access to training easier; establish a business networking system on a local or regional basis to share information, experiences and best practice	BHS (Chris Doran), BETA (Claire Williams), ABRS (Julian Marczak) to lead in conjunction with other industry bodies and Lantra	Managers often lack necessary skills and knowledge to manage their businesses effectively, nor do they know where to go to find sources of information	BHIC is bringing together interested parties for initial discussions on how to establish a business networking system on a regional or local basis in order to share information and best practice. Networking meetings held in 2006 in Hampshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire. East Midlands region, through the University of Lincoln are delivering a project called EM Ride where they are offering Business Management training to East Midlands proprietors through LSC funding. BETA has launched a 3 module, 3 day management training programme aimed at the small equestrian business manager with little or no direct training in business. Already run for the ABRS and BETA the modules offer training in managing people, financial management and relationship management
Action 11: Fiscal and regulatory constraints – Horse industry to identify fiscal and regulatory constraints on equestrian businesses, and make a cogent case for change where appropriate	BHIC (Graham Cory) to lead in conjunction with Horse and Pony Taxation Committee	Many claims are made about the effects of fiscal and regulatory constraints on horse businesses, but these are not always substantiated or accepted by national and local authorities	Defra has been in touch with the Valuation Office Agency and the Department for Communities and Local Government on rating issues, and the VOA have agreed to meet with the horse industry to discuss these issues if the Horse and Pony Taxation Committee indicate that this is necessary.

5

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 12: The Status of the Horse - Set up a working group representative of all parts of the industry to determine whether the status of the horse is a significant issue, and if so to establish an industry-wide position and make a convincing case for change, with consideration being given to the situation in other Member States	BETA (Claire Williams) to lead on behalf of the BHIC. Defra to support the working group on request by providing factual advice and guidance	Views on the optimum designation vary widely. No detailed work has been done by the industry as a whole to identify the implications	BETA established in 2006 a working group representative of all parts of the industry to determine whether the status of the horse is a significant issue. A date being set for first meeting of the working party in the first half of 2007. Defra will pursue this issue, in light of this group's findings
Action 13 Insurance - Pursue all three strands of the insurance issue i.e: A. Continue to discuss with Government ways of ensuring that the risks associated with riding are recognised and accepted B. Make rider, horse and instructor record forms freely available, and devise an educational programme to help riding establishment proprietors improve the quality of their records	A.BHS (Graham Cory) to lead B. BHS (Graham Cory) and ABRS, (Julian Marczak), to lead, in conjunction with representatives of the insurance industry	Significant insurance premium hikes have contributed to severe difficulties for some equestrian establishments The industry and insurance working group has already identified that better record keeping is one way to keep down premiums and devised new forms to assist riding schools in maintaining better records	A. Defra is representing the interests of the horse industry in a cross Government project to look at issues such as risk management and attaining insurance. It has drawn a number of developments to the BHIC's attention, such as the Heath and Safety Executive's web-based electronic self-assessment tool for farmers, which may well be relevant to many equestrian businesses as many risks will be the same. Discussions continue as to whether the risk inherent in riding can be reflected explicitly in law, however, section 1 of the Compensation Act 2006, which received Royal Assent on 25 July, confirms that when considering a claim for negligence or breach of statutory duty, the courts can take into account whether requiring particular precautions to be taken against a risk might prevent or impede a desirable activity from taking place or deter people from providing it. This provides helpful recognition that desirable activities, such as riding, may include a degree of risk, and should help to ensure that activities are not prevented because of the fear of litigation and excessively risk-averse behaviour.

6

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
C. Explore with Government ways in which the adverse implications of the Mirvahedy judgement can be ameliorated for horse owners	C.BHIC (Graham Cory) to lead, in conjunction with other stakeholders such as the CLA	C. Both Horse Industry and CLA have raised the issues of Mirvahedy judgement with DEFRA	B. BHS and ABRS disseminated rider, horse and instructor record forms to their member riding schools, and encouraged them and other non-affiliated schools to use them as these have been established as the most effective action to take to constrain rises in premiums. This form, together with the BHS Horse Assessment form and the BHS Instructor/Escort Details form can be downloaded free from www.bhs.org.uk/content/Ode-More.asp?Id=2014&pp=Approvals&pp=Publications&area=6 The BHS has also run a number of one-day courses for proprietors in which the issues of record keeping and risk management have been addressed. There remains work to be done in encouraging some proprietors to conduct proper risk assessments. C: The BHIC has been working with Defra to identify how the Act might be amended to address the problems caused by the Mirvahedy judgement, and supported Laurence Robertson's Ten Minute Bill which fell through lack of parliamentary time. Defra wrote to interested stakeholders in Autumn 2006 to invite views on possible amendment to the Animals Act, and the overwhelming majority of responses were in favour of a change. Defra Ministers have offered to provide appropriate support if a suitable vehicle to amend the Act, such as a Private Member's Bill, can be found. That offer remains on the table.
Action 14 : Statistical classifications - Facilitate the gathering of statistics that will better allow the value of the industry to be assessed, through a revision and redefinition of the Standard Industrial Classification and Standard Occupational Codes at a five digit level	BETA Claire Williams), to lead in conjunction with the BHIC, Lantra and the Office of National Statistics	Official statistics are often unhelpful with equestrian equipment being classified for data purposes (in the official statistics) for example together with luggage. Therefore there is no data to help identify the growth or otherwise of saddlery and other exports	An initial meeting with LANTRA was held in 2006 to discuss potential for change. It was found that any reclassification of data was much more difficult than first envisage as this would involve changes needed at EU level. Therefore this action has been put on hold pending further investigation as to the likelihood of success

7

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 16 : Promotional material - Promote the UK as a source of quality goods and services through preparation of a promotional paper and digital (DVD) guide to British excellence in the equestrian industry	BETA (Claire Williams) to lead for Industry, in conjunction with UK Trade and Investment	The reputation of British products could be more fully promoted and exploited to better develop existing and emerging markets	A DVD Guide to UK Equestrian Industry was prepared by UKTI in conjunction with BETA and launched in February 2006. An update of the printed guide is currently being prepared and will be published during 2007.
Action 16: Trade fairs and promotions – Encourage greater participation in overseas and domestic equestrian trade fairs and travel promotions, in order to highlight British expertise, products and tourism opportunities	BETA (Claire Williams) to lead for Industry, in conjunction with Visit Britain and UK Trade and Investment	In an expanding equestrian worldwide marketplace, the UK needs to be able to promote its equestrian products as widely and effectively as possible	BETA will continue to discuss with UK Trade and Investment and other bodies how to effectively utilize funding and resources for international marketing UK Inc had a presence at the World Games and has increasing participation in additional International Trade Fairs.
Action 17: New technologies and research and development - Encourage use of new and developing technologies and research and development in business, to improve productivity and efficiency	BETA (Claire Williams) to lead for Industry, in conjunction with the Department of Trade & Industry	Although this is being done in some instances, more could be done to improve access to Information Communication Technology (ICT) and build closer links between the industry and business support and advice in this field	BETA to continue to explore with governmental and regional bodies how closer cooperation can be achieved; and identify and exploit opportunities to make greater use of ICT in the development of horse-related products and services This action is ongoing. BETA is continuing at present to develop the standard for safe saddle manufacture, and measuring techniques for horse bedding standards.

8

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 18: Equestrian Tourism - Encourage a cohesive approach to promoting equestrian tourism through local authorities, regional tourism councils and national bodies; publish a national register of riding holidays and equestrian tourism opportunities on the internet; and establish a national descriptive grading system for equestrian tourism	BHS (Margaret Linington-Payne) to lead with BETA, BHB, ABRS and BEF working with holiday providers and regional and national tourism bodies	Many exciting and innovative individual equestrian tourism offerings are already available in England and Wales, but they are not always promoted as effectively as possible at regional and national level	Progress is being made – for example BETA is linking up with commercial tourism businesses to promote equine tourism in the UK as well as abroad. BETA also arranged an equestrian tourism stand at the Equitana International show in Germany in March 2007. BETA also published a guide to Riding Holidays in the UK, mid 2006 The BHS has expanded "Horses Welcome" a quality assured B&B scheme for horses from its Scottish origin to include England and Wales In 2006 Exmoor and the Quantocks riding guide was published and a new Radnor Forest Ride opened. Industry representatives to meet to discuss how to approach holiday providers and regional and national tourism bodies
Action 19: Recruitment and retention strategy - Devise and implement a strategy for attracting and retaining staff in all sectors of the industry	BHS (Margaret Linington-Payne) to lead in conjunction with the BHB, industry communications heads and Lantra	Industry currently facing major challenges in attracting and retaining sufficient levels of staff. There is no clear career structure, and often working conditions are poor and career progression limited	BHB has a recruitment and retention strategy in place for employees in the racing industry. BHS already produces careers literature, attends exhibitions and answers numerous queries from schools. They are currently drafting simple material for schools careers advisors; and also have a jobs register on the website Lantra has career-based literature relating to employment in the Horse industry http://www.lantra.co.uk/Equine/ The BHIC will explore sources of funding for marketing of this material more widely; and consider options for developing a central jobs register

9

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 20: Vocational training -Introduce a coordinated industry strategy to work with schools so as to provide work experience opportunities and vocational training across the Horse industry	BHS (Margaret Linington-Payne) to lead, in conjunction with BHEST	Equestrian training is only very occasionally included in sports teaching in schools, limiting opportunities for young people to develop an interest in leisure riding and potential equestrian careers	BHB and BHS are meeting to share good practice. Consultation ongoing to ensure new 14-9 diploma is relevant to industry requirements. BHS is utilising Sport England funding distributed through BEF to give school children the opportunity to experience riding and caring for horses.
Action 21: Staff management training - Encourage equestrian business proprietors to further their own skills in human resource management, health and safety and physical resource management	BHS (Chris Doran) and ABRS (Julian Marczak) to lead, in conjunction with Lantra	The BHB promotes Investors in People and encourages affiliated businesses to adopt it as a management development tool The rest of the industry is characterised by a fragmented pattern of staff management practices	Contact to be made with Business Link to investigate regional training availability. Ongoing discussions with Lantra and contact to be made with Regional Partnership managers.
Action 22: Skill levels and training needs - Undertake research to establish skill levels and training needs with the aim of defining current and future skills requirements	BHS (Chris Doran) ABRS (Julian Marczak) to lead, in conjunction with Lantra	The true level of skills needs within the Horse industry is not currently known, although anecdotal evidence exists of skills gaps and areas of shortage within the component sectors	BHS and ABRS are producing a questionnaire for all riding schools to identify particular training needs and skill gaps. BHS research is being utilised. Data is also available from the Sector Skills Agreement for the Equine industry.

10

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 23: Practical training good practice - Industry-based training providers and colleges to work together for better communication, to disseminate and share good practice for the practical training elements of education programmes, through optimising the use of human and physical resources	BHS (Chris Doran) to lead, in conjunction with College/ Industry liaison and advisory groups	Some within the industry consider that College courses do not fulfill industry requirements, especially regarding the practical content of equine qualifications, although this is disputed by Colleges	BHIC to encourage industry organisations to work with Colleges through their liaison and advisory groups, to improve relationships and to ensure that both College courses and other training provision fully address the agreed needs of the industry This is progressing. Wiltshire College for example has now worked BHS qualifications into all their students' timetables and qualifications. BHS organises meetings with College representatives and proprietors to identify areas of concern.
Action 24: Funding policy and age restrictions - Work with the Learning and Skills Council regarding the current policy of funding mainly large providers, the range of qualifications accepted, and barriers created by current age restrictions	BHS, (Margaret Linington-Payne) to lead, in conjunction with BHEST	It is almost impossible for those providing training for small numbers who are studying industry recognized non NVQ qualifications to access funding	BHIC and partners agreed to approach Learning and Skills Council in mid 2006 to explore ways of addressing the problem over small training providers Research has also been undertaken to establish riding school industry requirements – engaging with Lantra to ensure their consultations reflect the results.However, reorganisation of Learning and Skills Councils has meant it has been difficult to engage the necessary people. Response to a consultation document following the Leitch Review has stressed the needs of smaller providers.
Action 26: Training and skills coordination - Industry organisations to work together to achieve more co-ordination	BHIC (Margaret Linington-Payne) to lead, in conjunction with Lantra	A confusing overall picture. Several suites of qualifications exist across the industry with varying degrees of credibility	BHIC members to work together to locate resources needed to produce a matrix of all equestrian qualifications BHIC and Lantra are in discussion regarding the development of this matrix.

11

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 26: Achieve greater cooperation amongst existing access organisations - Develop an agreed structure within the industry in order to coordinate access interests, achieve greater cooperation amongst access bodies and ensure that knowledge and skills are marshalled to best effect	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener) to lead, in conjunction with other access interests within the industry	Many disparate organisations all working towards increasing access but with little communication or coordinated working	Equestrian Access Forum was created to increase engagement between existing access groups. This Forum will work together to secure sufficient resources and support to promote access issues on behalf of all riders and drivers It consists of The British Horse Society, British Driving Association, Endurance Great Britain, Mendip Cross Trails Trust, The National Federation of Bridleways Association and The South Pennine Packhorse Trails Trust, The vision for England will be issued in the summer 2007, and for Wales in the winter. Defra officials have been invited and attend Forum meetings.
Action 27: Engage with lead bodies in other fields - The industry must engage with the lead bodies in other fields, such as the Ramblers Association and Sustrans, to learn from their successes, and identify common causes to improve access for riders and drivers.	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener)	A rather fragmented situation with liaison between some user groups but not others. No significant interaction between Horse industry and leading organisations representing other access interests	Horse industry is intending to engage with and extend relationships with all user groups, and to develop a national access strategy to improve access for riders and drivers agreed by the parties to the rights of way consortium by end 2008 The Equestrian Access Forum, The Ramblers Association, Cyclists Touring Club, British Canoe Union, Central Council of Physical Recreation, Open Spaces Society, Youth Hostels Association, British Mountaineering Council, International Mountain Biking Association and British Caving Association have been working together and have issued a joint statement urging the government to ensure that its proposals for access to the English coast include proposals for access for all non motorised users. Defra will consider the outcomes of the EAF and any proposals put forward by the Forum in their proposed access strategy.

12

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 28: Local equestrian rights of way and public access - Local Authorities (LAs) to consider the industry's needs and to advertise and promote successful initiatives. Horse industry to contribute more effectively to local rights of way and planning processes and resulting Local Transport Plans	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener) and Local Access Forums (LAFs)	Fragmented situation with some LAs providing excellent liaison and some providing none. Riders interests are generally represented on LAFs, but this is not universal, and not all LAFs are operating at the same level of effectiveness	Horse industry to engage with and extend relationships with Local Authorities on access issues, through national level discussions with Local Government Association (LGA), and more local level action through Local Access Forums as they work on the development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans which need to be in place by 2007 Members of the EAF will be meeting with the LGA to discuss how local authorities can adopt a multi user policy in respect of all paths, integrate their transport policies with neighbouring authorities and ensure equal provision of safe routes for all vulnerable users. Defra, undertook further discussions with Natural England and the LGA, and identified best practice in the work of LAFs. As a result Defra then issued Guidance on the work of LAFs, to support and develop their advisory role in terms of improving access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area, in February 2007.
Action 29: Coordinated Plan for Improving Statutory Equestrian Access – To produce a definitive report outlining the true picture of equestrian access in England and Wales, and presenting a coordinated plan for protecting existing rights and improving these where possible	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener)	There is no current definitive picture of the true state of equestrian access in England and Wales – only anecdotal and often very localised evidence of access problems	The British Horse Society is implementing a GIS system that will assist in giving a definitive report on the true state of equestrian access. The Equestrian Access Forum has also been working with Defra to identify S15 CROW land so that it can be correctly recorded. Defra and its NDPBs are carrying out a number of access activities which may yield benefits for the Horse Industry. These include : - Natural England has completed research into coastal access, which includes the density of bridleways and byways. Natural England estimate that 7% of coastal rights of way have higher rights. - Defra approaching Forestry Commission to identify any further opportunities for increasing access for horse riders forward more effectively in the future

13

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 30: Publish a Good Practice Guide for those interested in expanding local access for riding - Organisations interested in expanding non-statutory access for riding would benefit from a Good Practice Guide incorporating the advice from those who have already learned their lessons the hard way	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener)	Local access groups have to work on their own, without the benefit of any up to date guidance material advising on good practice	BHS/EAF to work together to secure sufficient resources and support to develop the good practice guide, which should be completed by 2008
Action 31: Equestrian routes on farmland, woodland and coastal areas - Discuss and negotiate with Defra, the Rural Development Service () and other bodies to see how new land payments will affect existing and potential access on farmland; and also address other issues which concern landowners, to designing attractive 'packages' that will allow local authorities and local riders to negotiate with local landowners	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener)	Some concern exists amongst riders and landowners about the implications of various land payment schemes on the provision of non-statutory access routes	Discussions already underway between the Horse Industry and Defra and other bodies about how the schemes may affect existing and potential access. The EAF will be discussing with Defra the possibility of providing access options within Agri-environment scheme at the lowest level. EAF to explore the development of 'packages' to allow effective negotiation over access issues between riders, landowners and local authorities See Action 29 – which will also contribute towards this Action

14

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 32: Toll rides – In conjunction with Action 31, incorporate toll rides, if viable, in the packages that local riding groups can discuss with local landowners as an addition to an adequate basic public provision	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener) – including Toll ride organisations	Toll rides are very well supported and appreciated by users, but some groups do not believe they are beneficial to the improvement of the overall network	EAF is intending to engage with Toll rides organisations and users to ensure that their interests are taken into account in developing overall access provision Members of the EAF will be working with toll ride organisations to provide access where it has not been possible to provide safe off-road access by other means. Defra looked into the adverse effect of the Single Payment Scheme (in England) on toll rides, and alleviated some of the concerns raised by Toll rides groups and clarified the Scheme's rules.
Action 33: On-and off-road safety campaign –Further discussion with Department for Transport on the development and delivery of a campaign to educate riders, carriage drivers, cyclists and motorists both on and off-road routes	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener)	Increasing traffic on roads leading to greater incidence of problems between riders and cars, ranging from minor incidents to fatalities of both equines and humans	BHS/EAF to engage in further consultation with Government departments , including Department for Transport and the Highways Agency in order to develop, by end of 2006, an ongoing strategy to encourage all road users to act in a responsible way to each other. The Equestrian Access Forum is working with other user groups to continue to press for lower speed limits on rural and minor roads. Highways Agency currently pursuing Road Safety education programmes for vulnerable users. Defra continue to engage with DfT on equestrian access issues,

15

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 34: Urban and suburban riding and driving – Mount a high profile campaign to alert people, local authorities and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the benefits of equestrianism, the availability of urban riding and driving and the need to provide equestrian facilities to serve areas of major new housing development	Equestrian Access Forum (Mark Weston as convener), with BEF(Paul Frost)	Riding and driving are currently poorly reflected in urban and suburban recreational route provision. Poor statistics on the positive health benefits of equestrian exercise, preventing holistic approach to future planning policies	The BEF National Facilities Strategy refers to the potential for increasing urban riding and equestrian facilities. Sport England has recently allocated funding to the BHS for a number of inner city schemes linking schools to local riding establishments thus introducing children to riding through the National Curriculum. The EAF is collating information that illustrates the benefits of equestrianism. By 2010, the Horse Industry to have adopted a strategy setting out the benefits of equestrianism and the need to increase the availability of urban riding and driving and to provide equestrian facilities near urban development. To be carried out in conjunction with Action 28.
Action 35: Encourage Local Authorities and others with land management responsibilities, to work with the Horse Industry, to develop pasture management projects in order to promote good land management and provide 'best practice' advice	Defra, Horse Industry Team to lead, in conjunction with BHIC, LGA and LAs	Some very good examples exist of high quality pasture management guidance – such as material produced by Surrey County Council and Kent Downs AONB. But the overall picture is patchy, with too few local authorities and land owners giving sufficient consideration to good pasture management	Joint Defra/BHIC letter sent in 2006 outlining current successful projects, both in pasture management and waste, giving information on where to access information, and asking relevant council officials for any feedback on relevant initiatives they are undertaking so that BHIC can keep an up to date accessible database on their website. BHIC currently compiling information on further waste management information (in addition to manure) such as disposal of plastics and twine etc, with a view to promoting this information amongst horse owners through the website.

16

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 38: Code of practice for good land management – Explore the possibility of developing a joint Industry / Government code of best practice for all land owners / managers in the Horse Industry, to encourage better land management (taking into account equine welfare as well as biodiversity and wildlife conservation), building on the good work of Surrey County Council and others	BHIC (Graham Cory), to lead in conjunction with Surrey County Council and Defra	Local authority approaches to equine planning issues and land management varies across the country. Information on good practice not always easily available	BHIC to look at developing a draft Code of Practice and communications programme to enable effective delivery of information to both horse owners and Local Authorities
Action 37: Produce a clear map of where horses are grazed - Evaluate the available spatial information about where horses are grazed, and the quality of land horses are kept on, and explore the development of a means to fill any subsequent gaps	BHIC (Graham Cory) to lead, in conjunction with Defra/Welsh Assembly	Very little spatial information currently exists on where horses are grazed and the quality of the land on which they are kept	The BHS is developing a GS satellite mapping service which it hopes to offer online on the BHS website. All bridleways, members, horse accident blackspots are currently being mapped and they are looking at ways in which to use this new facility to map out where horses are actually grazed.

17

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 38 : Secure a more consistent performance by Local Authorities on equine planning issues Develop a closer relationship with local authorities, and explore the possibility of providing them with training and education relating to equine planning issues, and to discuss how the differing approaches which local authorities have to horses can be harmonised.	BHS (Chris Doran) to lead	Very different approach bydifferent local authorities to planning applications, especially concerning horses	Industry to meet with local authority representatives to develop a plan forgreater information sharing and foster a more positive approach to equine developments. This is progressing and a local authority planning note has been identified as offering clear and comprehensive planning advice to equine enterprises. Ongoing discussions between Government and the horse industry are moving forward to producing a generic guidance note on planning issues effecting horse owners.
Action 39: Promotion of waste management information - Ensure all horse owners have access to information regarding safe, correct, waste disposal; and Horse Industry bodies and Government to continue to liaise on pragmatic solutions to equine manure waste storage, composting, spreading and disposal	BHIC, (Cathy McGlynn) to lead in conjunction with Defra and the Environment Agency	Horse waste is legally classified as a controlled waste, although it is handled by the Environment Agency under their low risk initiative. However, some confusion exists amongst the industry regarding correct and appropriate manure storage and disposal practices	Extensive information including the Surrey County Council guidance notes added to the BHIC website to enable horse owners to access easily understandable and pragmatic information. Joint Defra/BHIC letter promoting waste management information sent to county councils in 2006. Defra have developed a specific equine waste management page on their website to aid horse owners in accessing the appropriate information. The BHIC website also contains detailed advice on manure issues. BHIC, Defra and the Environment Agency to continue to work together and maintain a pragmatic approach to manure storage and disposal

18

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 40: Information on conservation grazing - Review existing information, guidelines and codes of practice covering conservation grazing and, if necessary, produce a national code to support and encourage this practice	Defra to lead, in conjunction with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and native breed groups	Many successful projects currently exist, but the use of native ponies in such conservation projects could be developed further	Defra and the Horse Industry to look at ways of raising awareness of usefulness of native horses and ponies to biodiversity and conservation grazing.
Action 41: Coaching Development Programme - Extend tBEF's coaching programme to others wishing to enhance their own coaching standards	BEF (Colin Wilson) to lead	There are varying levels of coaching developments across the equestrian sports	Organisations representing Horseball, Polocrosse and Mounted Games are now BEF Associate Members and have joined BEF's Coaching Development Action Team and have accepted . UKCC in process of implementation.
Action 42: Facilities Strategy - Share BEF's Facilities Strategy with other riding bodies	BEF (Tim Hadaway) to lead	Many organisations do not have such facilities strategies even though they would be	Facilities Strategy published and launched in May 2006. Document distributed across all BEF Member Bodies, to all BHS/ABRS approved riding establishments, RDAs, Sport England Regions and Local Authorities
Action 43: Long-term Athlete and Equine Development Programmes - Extend BEF's long-term athlete and equine development programmes to other organisations	BEF (Colin Wilson and Jan Rogers) to lead	No common knowledge of action across industry regarding athlete and equine development programmes	Programme published in March 07. A hard copy of the Progarmme will also be sent to key non-BEF equestrian organisations. The plan will be available, promoted and updated on the BEF website. BEF to put a plan in place to develop communication and information sharing with other equestrian organisations.

19

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 44: Affiliation - Market to unaffiliated groups the benefits of affiliation	BEF (Andrew Finding) to lead	Affiliation often seen as too costly and too high a level for 'ordinary' riders	BEF Plan for Participation is n place including actions to encourage greater affiliation with BEF Member Bodies. Implementation ongoing. BEF continues to seek to represent all aspect of the horse sport and leisure industry.
Action 46: Establish lead bodies to assist in the improvement of our horses and ponies	BEF(Andrew Finding) to lead	A lead body exists for the thoroughbred horse but not for others	Following the publication of the proposed Lead Bodies, *British Breeding* has been accepted as the Lead Body for the sport horse and pony sector at a meeting on 24 January 2007. Following this, British Breeding will report on its progress within this sector and consult with other Lead Bodies regarding developments in their sectors.A steering group has been formed and will meet again on 15 March 2007. BHS remains the nominee for the recreational horse and pony sector. Native Ponies GB will contact the BHS with regard to their willingness to become Lead Body for the native and indigenous horses and ponies sector.
Action 48 : Capitalise upon the data contained in NED - Use information available from the National Equine Database to: better select animals for breeding, develop a simple system for comparing the breeding values of mares and stallions; collate and market pedigree and performance data; provide data to support the marketing of horses and ponies and	The new lead bodies (refer Action 45 desired outcome), acting in concert	All the necessary elements are in place. All that is required is leadership and a willingness to co-operate Organisations will be required to 'give a little of their empires whilst retaining full sovereignty'	NED is scheduled for public launch this year and the team is working hard to develop the public face of NED system, NED Online, maximise the quality and quantity of data therein to fulfil this Action, and implement an informed marketing plan so that the target market is aware of the facilities NED will offer. BEF has funded the development and rebranding of *British Breeding's* (Graham Suggett's) World Undergraduate Equine Research Database (WUERD) to make freely available online abstracts of research at all levels from many academic establishments. The new web based database is called the British Equestrian Federation Researching Equines Database (BEFRED) and will be launched at the National Equine Forum on 22 March *British Breeding* continues to develop its Breeders' Quality Mark (BQM) awarded to studs demonstrating best practice. Extensive marketing activity is

20

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
work being undertaken to eliminate genetic defects; and make evaluation scores widely known			underway for 2007 *British Breeding's* Futurity and Young Horse Evaluations schemes have been rolled into one continuous evaluation sequence for young horses from foals to six years. This now forms a comprehensive set of first steps on the Long Term Equine Development (LTED) pathway. Discussions are planned to work more closely with BD, BE and BSJA. A system of continuous professional development is proposed for *British Breeding's* evaluators as part of the LTED process. A system of young horse trainer identification has been started by *British Breeding's* Young Horse Training Group Defra is already making a significant financial contribution to the development of NED, and will use its place on the NED board to encourage the Horse Industry to make the best use of its extensive capabilities
Action 47: Recognition of quality mares - Determine agreed criteria as to what qualifies a mare (other than racing thoroughbred mares) to be rated 'Premium'. Initiate a Premium Mare Designation. Establish Premium Mare evaluation programmes	The lead bodies	All the necessary elements are in place. All that is required is leadership and a willingness to co-operate. Organisations will be required to 'give a little of their empires whilst retaining full sovereignty'	*British Breeding* recognises Elite Mares as those scoring over 80% in its Futurity Young Horse Evaluations. Other definitions are almost certainly in place with other studbooks and grading organisations and these should be considered through the Lead Body mechanism Premium mare status to be established as above A Premium mare evaluation programme is to be arranged. *British Breeding* continues to direct research to develop EBVs to determine heritability of performance traits in breeding stock to further this objective

21

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
Action 48: Premiums for quality mares –A. Generate sufficient income from British Breeding initiatives and sponsorship to be able to offer premiums to: a. British-bred mares and stallions achieving given grading standards; b. British breeders achieving outstanding success; and c. success by British-bred horses and ponies in selected competitions B. Investigate the possibility of national and local tax concessions	*British Breeding* (Graham Suggett) to lead Horse and Pony Taxation Committee to lead (See Action 11)	There is currently little incentive to remain competitive	Definitions have yet to be formally established (see above). The Lead Body will determine how a Premium Mare and a Premium Stallion are defined. *British Breeding's* Futurity Young Horse Evaluations recognise and financially reward the stallions with the most successful progeny performance record in this scheme. *British Breeding* does not generate sufficient revenue to offer meaningful premia at present. *British Breeding* has standardised evaluations for all young sport horses and ponies. Consultation with the Lead Body members will determine whether this can be refined. British Breeding uses all of the revenue it generates from its schemes (after running costs) to pay premia Which competitions are to feature still remains to be arranged
Action 48 : Support for native and indigenous breeds - Enter into discussion with Defra, English and Welsh Nature, the Countryside Council for Wales and the English and Wales Tourist Boards regarding their recognising native and indigenous ponies and horses as being	Lead Bodies	A National Steering Committee has been established to inform Government policy and assist in monitoring and managing farm animal genetic resources	This is being taken forward by the BHS and Native Ponies GB which have been proposed/proposed themselves as the Lead Body for the native and indigenous horse and pony sector To be arranged by that Lead Body when it is formally decided

22

Action	Responsibility	Position at Launch of Strategy – Dec. 05	Current Position. Action in Progress and Next Steps :
an essential part of the process of conserving natural habitats and a valuable asset to the tourist industry			
Action 60: Monitoring of the Strategy – Publish an Action Plan in spring 2006. Produce subsequent reports on progress at suitable stages to monitor the success of the strategy and the development of the Horse Industry	BHIC and Defra's Horse Industry Team	Strategy implementation being taken forward through this Action plan. Monitoring of the Action points is underway and a report will be produced in due course	Defra and the BHIC will continue to meet regularly to discuss progress of all the issues, and to maintain the constructive dialogue they have built up. Defra and BHIC to continue work together to keep the Action Plan up to date on the BHIC website and will produce regular progress reports.

23

Appendix III: Comparison of industry data and satisfaction rates

		NES 1999	NES 2006	NES 2011	BHS 2010	SE 2011
1	Number surveyed	**3,000**	**5,078**	**6,000**	**1,248**	**113,055***
2	People who have ridden in past 12 months	2.4m	4.3m	3.5m		
3	People ride regularly (once a month minimum)	1.4m	2.1m	1.6m	849	304,000**
4	Used to ride and interested in horse riding again		2.7m	1.3m		
5	Horse owners	577,200	721,500	451,000		
6	Privately owned horses	960,000	1.2m	1m		
7	Gross output of equestrian sector	£2.5b	£4b	£3.8b		
8	Total industry employment (racing and equestrian)		167-267,000			
9	Costs for care of horse	£2.3b	£2.6b	£2.8b		
10	Costs Horse riding wear inc hats		£409m	£320m		
11	Seasonality of horse riding (year-long activity)	77%	95%	98%		
12	Gender - female participants	75%	75%	90%	93%	90%
13	Ethnicity - female participants - white					98%
14	Disability - female riders				23%	8%**
15	Income - female riders (high £41,600+)					46%*
16	Working status - student					3.1%*
17	Working status - employed					1.8%*
18	Working status - unemployed					1.2%*
19	Age female <24		31%	48%	14%	6%**
20	Age female >45			37%	49%	1.4%**
21	Equine-related activities revenue - racing		2.5b	3.7b		
22	Equine-related activities revenue - events			6m		
23	Reason to stop horse riding - time	45%	36%	30%		
24	Reason to stop horse riding - expense	20%	23%	40%		
25	Reason to stop horse riding - no interest	35%	41%	30%		
26	Regional areas - highest South West					2.2%*
27	Regional areas - lowest London***					0.5%*

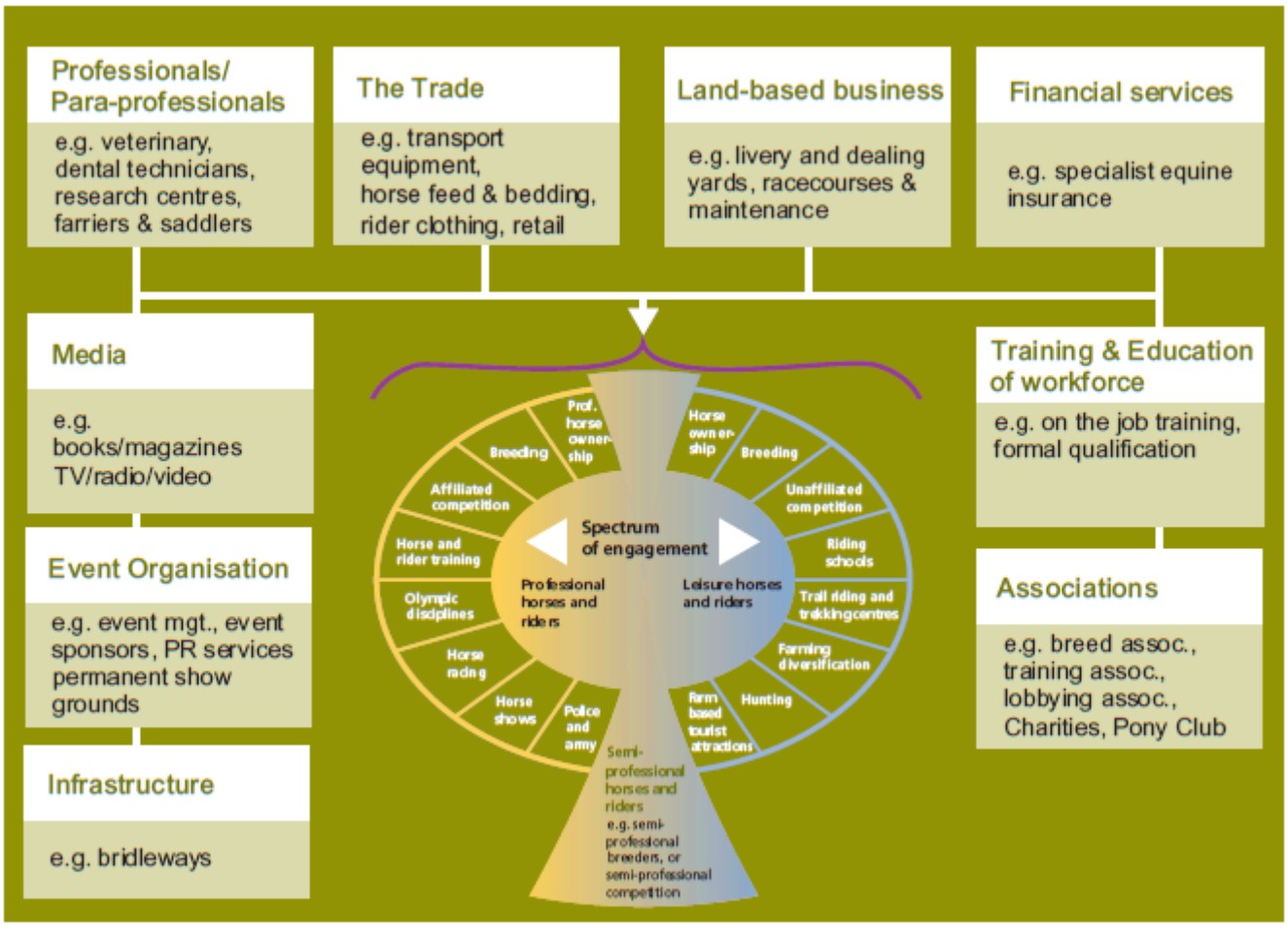
* female equestrian participants only
** based on all female respondents (*n*=21,557,330)
*** Suggested as a result of limited available open space for horse riding purposes Industry satisfaction ratings[30]

[30] The above "satisfaction" measures are a set of generic variables posed to all respondents of Sport England"s annual "Active People Surveys" (APS). Conducted by MORI - A market research company – see www.ipsos-mori.com

	Psychological/social/economic data	**BHS 2010**	**SE 2011**
	Number surveyed	**1,248**	**113,055***
1	Satisfaction – overall		71%
2	Satisfaction - release and diversion	80%	85%
3	Satisfaction - exertion and fitness		68%
4	Satisfaction – coaching		68%
5	Satisfaction - people and staff		63%
6	Satisfaction – social		62%
7	Satisfaction - ease of participating		57%
8	Satisfaction – officials		56%
9	Satisfaction – facilities		53%
10	Satisfaction - own performance		52%
11	Satisfaction - value for money		44%
12	Motivation - interaction with a horse	82%	
13	Motivation - contact with nature	80%	
14	Motivation - psychological - relaxed, happy, etc	80%	
15	Exertion – moderate – general horse riding	3.7METs	
16	Exertion – moderate – trotting	5.0METs	

* female equestrian participants only

Appendix IV: A conceptual map of upstream categories of supply for the horse industry (HCR, 2004: 11)



Appendix V: Interviewees (*n*=43)

No.	Position/Role	Research participation	Age range	Income range	Level	Male/ Female
1	BHS Regional Development Officer (2 x interviews) 'Melissa' (40)	Representative for the area providing an in depth overview of the industry, its operational protocols and objectives.	>35	20-30,000	Regional (meso)	F
2	BHS Chairman (2 x interviews) 'Felicity' (62)	Overseeing the regional division -provided a number of industry contracts and insight into how policy implementation was progressing at the local level.	>35	20-30,000	Regional (meso)	F
3	BEF Regional Development Co-ordinator (2 x interviews) 'Carrie' (36)	Actively working with elite competitors in a range of disciplines as part of BEF programmes. In addition, implementing grass-roots programmes between schools and riding centres.	>35	30-40,000	Regional (meso)	F
4	World Horse Welfare Field Officer 'Steve' (59)	Introduced the rescue and welfare aspect of the industry in the UK. Discussing how the WHW operates and the impact of policy on their work. In addition, an insight into how the economic situation has affected the number of welfare cases.	>35	20-30,000	Regional (meso)	M
5	ABRS Inspector (volunteer) 'Angela' (34)	ABRS operate from central Head Quarters in Horsham. This equine organisation does not employ regional representatives but rely on volunteers who are paid when required to perform inspections.	22-35	20-30,000	Regional (meso)	F
6	Right of Way Policy Officers (2) (South of Region) (2 x interviews) 'Lucy'/ 'Robert'	Council representatives attempting to engage with the equestrian community to understand and address their needs in line with implementing official policy.	>35	-	Regional (meso)	M/F
7	Right of Way Policy Officers (2) (North of Region) (2 x interviews) 'Trevor'/ 'Brad'	Council representatives attempting to engage with the equestrian community to understand and address their needs in line with implementing official policy.	>35	-	Regional (meso)	M (2)

No.	Position/Role	Research participation	Age range	Income range	Level	M/F
8	Centre Manager Equus (3 x interviews) 'Kathryn' (37)	Central contact and interviewee – allowing full access to the operational and commercial aspects of the centre. Providing essential background on the social, economic and environmental barriers facing the centre.	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F
9	Yard Manager Equus (2 x interviews) 'Kay' (39)	Provided an insight into the daily running of the yard and the barriers faced within balancing the charitable and commercial customers and lessons. In addition, the responsibility of managing trainees and the health of horses in an urban environment.	>35	20-30,000	Micro	F
10	Volunteer Co-ord. Equus 'Roger' (46)	Interview participant	>35	20-30,000	Micro	M
11	Freelance Instructor/BHS Field Access Officer Equus 'Nicole' (38)	Interview participant	>35	20-30,000	Micro	F
12	Freelance Instructor Equus 'Kendra' (33)	Interview participant	22-35	20-30,000	Micro	F
13	Pony club member/ Volunteer Equus 'Poppy' (8)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
14	Pony club member/ Volunteer Equus 'Grace' (9)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
15	Pony club member/ Volunteer Equus 'Florence' (9)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
16	AdultNovice/volunteer Equus 'Lucinda' 41)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F
17	Adult novice/volunteer Equus 'Alicia' (37)	Interview participant	>35	Housewife	Micro	F
18	Proprietor Hengst (2 x interviews) 'Claire' (41)	Central contact and interviewee – allowing full access to the operational and commercial aspects of the centre/hotel functions. Providing essential background on the social, economic/environmental barriers facing the centre.	>35	>50,000 (from hotel)	Micro	F

No.	Position/Role	Research participation	Age range	Income range	Level	M/F
19	Head Instructor Hengst (2 x interviews) 'Tess' (18)	A member of the family providing an insight into the daily running of the yard and their dual role as part of the hotel business. Introduced the perspective of 'growing up' into the centre environment of the industry.	3-21	10-20,000	Micro	F
20	Yard Manager Hengst (2 x interviews) 'Shannon' (28)	Provided an insight into the daily running of the yard and the barriers faced within balancing the lessons, trading horses, liveries and equestrian feed customer demands. In addition, the responsibility of meeting BHS standards and addressing inspection visits.	22-35	20-30,000	Micro	F
21	Livery customer Hengst 'James' (42)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	M
22	Livery customer Hengst 'Tracey' (40)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F
23	Commercial customer Hengst 'Adele' (9)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
24	Commercial customer Hengst 'Sophie' (10)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
25	Proprietor Fohlen (2 x interviews) 'Fiona' (66)	Central contact allowing full access to the operational and commercial aspects of the centre and riding holiday functions. Providing essential background on the social, economic and environmental barriers facing the centre/organic farming practices.	>35	>50,000	Micro	F
26	Head Instructor Fohlen (2 x interviews) 'Scarlet' (42)	A key member of staff possessing in depth knowledge of the ethos and practices required by the proprietor.	>35	20-30,000	Micro	F

No.	Position/Role	Research participation	Age range	Income range	Level	M/F
27	Yard Manager Fohlen (2 x interviews) 'Deborah' (29)	Focused on yard duties – does not instruct. Insists on embedding the holistic horse experience throughout the yard and livery service.	22-35	20-30,000	Micro	F
28	Trainee Instructor Fohlen 'Kim' (22)	Interview participant	22-35	10-20,000	Micro	F
29	Trainee Instructor Fohlen 'Jenny' (24)	Interview participant	22-35	10-20,000	Micro	F
30	Adult Novice Fohlen 'Penny' (46)	Interview participant	>35	40-50,000	Micro	F
31	Adult intermediate Fohlen 'Liz' (52)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F
32	Child intermediate Fohlen 'Thomas' (11)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	M
33	Proprietor Cavallo (3 x interviews) 'Isla' (69)	Central contact and interviewee – providing an insight into running a centre outside the representative bodies jurisdiction. In addition, full access to the operational, commercial and hunting aspects of the centre. Providing essential background on the social, economic and environmental barriers facing the centre.	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F
34	Yard Manager/Instructor Cavallo (2 x interviews) 'Amber' (40)	Key informant regarding the daily functioning of the yard from lesson provision to schooling hunt horses for the season.	>35	20-30,000	Micro	F
35	Instructor/Maintenance Cavallo 'Richard' (36)	Interview participant	>35	20-30,000	Micro	M
36	Freelance Instructor Cavallo 'Rose' (51)	Interview participant	>35	20-30,000	Micro	F
37	Freelance Instructor/livery Cavallo 'Iona' (49)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F
38	Intermediate Freelance Instructor Cavallo 'Brian' (54)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	M
39	Livery customer Cavallo 'Pete' (65)	Interview participant	>35	>50,000	Micro	M

No.	Position/Role	Research participation	Age range	Income range	Level	M/F
40	Livery customer Cavallo 'Trish' (48)	Interview participant	>35	>50,000	Micro	F
41	Child novice Cavallo 'Steph' (11)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
42	Child novice Cavallo 'Cleo' (12)	Interview participant	3-21	-	Micro	F
43	Livery customer Cavallo 'Heather' (37)	Interview participant	>35	30-40,000	Micro	F

Appendix VI: Site information sheet (on headed paper)

Doctoral Study ~ Miss Karen Elliott

"Policy implementation as a wicked problem: A study of the horse-world"

The project will:

- Assess economic barriers and bureaucratic systems and their impact upon different horse-based industries (impacts of bureaucracy, insurance frameworks and European level directives).
- Evaluate the significance of environmental constraints upon horse-related industries.
- Investigate barrier to supporting or impeding greater consumer engagement in horse-related activities.

Background and context

The horse is an important cultural icon in the UK, both as expressed through classic children's literature (Sewell 1994), on the sporting field (Sassoon 1999) and for tourism (North East Tourism Board 2006). Badminton is the biggest spectator event in the UK and events such as the Horse of the Year Show and Burghley Horse Trials attract significant crowds. The horse also performs a variety of important economic, social and environmental roles in the UK and this can give rise to an ambiguity as to how to best position the horse industry's contribution. The government has established a number of national priorities: economic growth, community development, education, sport, health, rural regeneration, environmental protection and social inclusion. Most recently in respect to the horse, the government's 2005 Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales outlined a framework for change. If the full potential of the horse within the government's national priorities is to be realised, the role of the horse needs to be more clearly established. The strategy report provides several directions to pursue. Prepared by the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) in partnership with DEFRA, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Welsh Assembly Government, the report represented important and diverse interest groups within the BHIC, identifying a lack of co-ordination within industry; a need to improve economic efficiency; a desire to persuade new people into the sport in additional calling for integrated responsibility from those who participate at any level in taking the strategy forward.

Relevance to policy

The study seeks to engage with the opportunities and difficulties highlighted by the strategy through research. There remains the significant issue of implementation and understanding the needs of these different participatory groups on the ground. The

research proposed here will apply multi-site research to gain a detailed picture, whilst also using a holistic approach that positions the horse industry in its economic, social and environmental context.

Key research questions

- What ***economic*** support systems and barriers face horse-based industries? (What are the impacts of bureaucracy, insurance frameworks and European level directives? What challenges face those diversifying or expanding from a private yard into a commercial one?)

- How does the local ***environmen*t** uniquely affect the viability of horse industries? (For example, access rights competition with four-wheel drive recreational users and walkers or low-flying training zones near airbases? What barriers to expansion exist for suburban riding schools and what issues are faced by rural schools operating under Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) restrictions?)

- What ***social systems*** support, hinder or enhance the horse as an important source of leisure and recreation? (What business advice, training and support is available locally; how are horse businesses best marketed; what interactional processes are important in recreational and leisure horse-riding on the ground from both the perspectives of the provider and the consumer?)

- The research will apply these questions to the **four businesses identified in the first workpackage.** Multi-site research involves multi-strategy research and will include:
- ***Interviews*** (with business owners; key staff; key policy makers in tourism and planning; participants);
- ***Observation*** (of the different horse industries, potentially including participant observation);
- ***Documentary analysis of the policy framework***, site-specific material (such as accounts, liability disclaimer forms; business plans and marketing sources such as websites where available).

Confidentiality

This study will adhere to the ESRC and British Sociological Association's ethical guidelines. Permission will be sought to conduct participant observation within all four of the identified riding establishments. No identifying references will be made to any of the research participants or their associated riding establishments within my thesis or in subsequent published or unpublished disseminated reports and articles. All interview participants will be fully informed about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research and will be asked to complete and sign a consent form before interviews in order to maintain anonymity of all participants.

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Date: 2nd April 2007 Version 1

Appendix VII: Research Participant Consent Form – Diary sheet/interviews (on headed paper)

"Policy implementation as a wicked problem: A study of the horse-world"

Doctoral Student: Miss Karen Elliott

CONSENT FORM

This is to confirm that I understand the research purpose and have agreed to take part.

Please tick box to indicate the following:

I have received sufficient information about the project and what my involvement will entail ☐

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions of the researcher and have received satisfactory answers ☐

I understand that I may take part in as much or as little of the research as I choose without having to give any reasons ☐

I understand that I may withdraw from the research at any time without having to give a reason and with no negative consequences to myself ☐

I agree to take part in this study ☐

Name: …….. Signature: …….. Date: ……..
(Participant)

Date: 5th November 2007 Version 1

Appendix VIII: Interview - BEF Regional Development Co-ordinator

Core Questions

1. What is your role as a Development Co-ordinator for the BEF?
2. Has your role changed as a result of the Horse Strategy?
3. Are communication networks between the equine organisations established and working?
4. What are the main difficulties you have faced as a BEF representative?
5. Do you receive support in your role, or what would assist you?
6. How can participation in equestrianism be increased within the current horse-world or industry structure?
7. Riding centres are reported in the Horse Strategy as in decline, how does the BEF support centres?
8. How engaged are grassroots equestrians with the Horse Strategy and wider industry?
9. What additional support can the BEF provide to riding centres to increase participation?
10. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?
11. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?
12. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 7th November 2007 Final Version 2

Appendix IX: Follow-up Interviews - BEF Regional Development Co-ordinator

Core Questions

1. Have there been any noticeable changes to your role since our last discussion and during the implementation of the Horse Strategy?

2. Has the BEF encouraged closer working partnerships between the BHS and ABRS to develop riding centres, encourage participant and implement the Horse Strategy?

3. How has the schools network programme for riding centres been funded and developed?

4. Will this programme apply to only BHS approved centres?

5. How do you decide which centres will be included in the programme?

6. Are communication networks between equine organisations and grassroots level now in place?

7. What are the main difficulties you have faced as a BEF co-ordinator?

8. Do you require further support in your role?

9. Following the 2008 financial crisis riding centres indicate struggling to survive and receive little support for equine organisations, how does the BEF support these riding centres?

10. Are the Horse Strategy implementation deadlines being met by the BEF?

11. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

12. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?

13. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 4th January 2010 Final Version

Appendix X: Interviews - BHS Chairperson

Core Questions

1. What is your role as a volunteer chairperson for the BHS?
2. Has your role changed as a result of the Horse Strategy?
3. Have you developed partnerships with the BHS Regional Development Officer, ABRS and BEF to improve riding centres?
4. Are communication networks between these equine organisations established and working?
5. What are the main difficulties you have faced as a BHS volunteer?
6. What would support you in your role?
7. Riding centres are reported in the Strategy as in decline, how does the local BHS Committee support centres and increasing participation in equestrianism?
8. Are grassroots equestrians aware of, and engaged with the Horse Strategy?
9. How can the issues of increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy be approached within the horse-world?
10. What additional support can the BHS provide to riding centres to increase participation?
11. How do you view the future for grassroots riding centres, participation and engagment with the Horse Strategy?
12. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?
13. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 7th November 2007 Final Version 3

Appendix XI: Follow-up Interviews - BHS Chairperson

Core Questions

1. Have there been any noticeable changes to your role since our last discussion and during the implementation of the Horse Strategy?

2. Have the partnerships with the BHS Development Officer, council officers, ABRS and BEF improved to develop riding centres?

3. Are communication networks between these equine organisations working?

4. Do you require further support to implement the Horse Strategy?

5. How does the BHS Committee support riding centres and equestrians?

6. Do believe engagement with the Horse Strategy has increased?

7. Following the financial crisis in 2008, have you noticed any differences in BHS membership, riding centres and equestrian participation?

8. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

9. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?

10. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 4th January 2010 Final Version 2

Appendix XII: Interviews - BHS Regional Development Officer

Core Questions

1. What is your role as a Development Officer for the BHS?
2. Has your role changed as a result of the Horse Strategy?
3. Are communication networks between the equine organisations established and working?
4. What are the main difficulties you have faced as a BHS representative?
5. Do you receive support in your role, or what would assist you?
6. How can participation in equestrianism be increased within the current horse-world or industry structure?
7. Riding centres are reported in the Horse Strategy as in decline, how does the BHS support centres?
8. How engaged are grassroots equestrians with the Horse Strategy and wider industry?
9. What additional support can the BHS provide to riding centres to increase participation?
10. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?
11. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?
12. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 7th November 2007 Final Version 2

Appendix XIII: Follow-up Interviews - BHS Development Officer

Core Questions

1. Have there been any noticeable changes to your role since our last discussion and during the implementation of the Horse Strategy?

2. Has the BHS encouraged a closer working partnership with the ABRS to develop riding centres, encourage participant and implement the Horse Strategy?

3. How has the schools network programme for riding centres been funded and developed?

4. Will this programme apply to only BHS approved centres?

5. How do you decide which centres will be included in the programme?

6. Are communication networks between equine organisations and grassroots level now in place?

7. What are the main difficulties you have faced as a BHS Officer?

8. Do you require further support in your role?

9. Following the 2008 financial crisis riding centres indicate struggling to survive and receive little support for equine organisations, how do you support these riding centres?

10. Are the Horse Strategy implementation deadlines being met by the BHS?

11. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

12. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?

13. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 4th January 2010 Final Version

Appendix XIV: Interviews - Policy Officers Rights of Way (RoWIP)

Core Questions

1. How aware are the council *per se* of equestrian requirements and access?

2. What are the perceptions of equestrianism within the council and how does this affect policy decisions?

3. Has there been any resistance to including equestrianism as part of the current policy?

4. What have been the main difficulties in gathering information on equestrian access needs to inform your policies?

5. Did you contact a representative body?

6. Have you heard of the Horse Strategy?

7. Have you conducted your own research projects on equestrianism and access?

8. Has there been an information exchange between councils regarding equestrian research, such as the McAuley and McGee report (2005) in the Tees Valley area?

9. Have you encountered any differences in approaching equestrian representatives in comparison to cycling and rambling associations?

10. Are there any factors which have helped the data gathering process?

11. Are there any planned future developments for your research, policies and implementing the Horse Strategy?

12. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding the council"s policies, equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 7th November 2007 Final Version 2

Appendix XV: Follow-up Interviews: Policy Officers Rights of Way (RoWIP)

Core Questions

1. Since our last discussion have there been any noticeable changes in the priority given to equestrian access requirements within council policy?

2. Have perception changed towards equestrianism and how does this affect the policy decision-making process?

3. Do you still encounter difficulties regarding gathering information on equestrian access requirements at local-level to inform your policies?

4. Has the communication contact with local equine organisations improved or deteriorated?

5. Has any aspect of the Horse Strategy been implemented as part of your policies?

6. Have you conducted further research into equestrianism and access?

7. Do you now liaise with your council colleagues across the region regarding equestrianism and access issues?

8. Have relations improved or remained the same between you and equestrian representatives in comparison to cycling and rambling associations?

9. Are there any recent factors which improved the data gathering process?

10. Are there any future plans to conduct further research into equestrianism or appoint specific officers?

11. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding the council"s policies, equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 4th January 2010 Final Version 1

Appendix XVI: Interviews - riding centre proprietors/yard managers

Core Questions

1. Are you aware of the Horse Strategy?
2. Why do you believe makes people participate in equestrianism?
3. Have you noticed any changes in the way the horse-world operates since the Horse Strategy was introduced?
4. What factors impact on business growth for your riding centre?
5. Has the economic climate also affected your business?
6. Have staffing levels been affected?
7. Have you noticed a decrease in participation?
8. How do you market the riding centre to attract new participants?
9. Has marketing increased participation?
10. Do you regularly evaluate the way you operate your business?
11. To what extent do access issues affect the activities you can offer participants?
12. What have been the main difficulties you have faced running a riding centre?
13. Have you accessed free business free advice from organisations such as Business Link?
14. Do you believe the horse BHIC and Defra support grassroots equestrianism and riding centres?
15. What additional support from the horse industry would benefit grassroots equestrianism and riding centres?
16. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?
17. What recommendations would you suggest to the horse industry to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?
18. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

(These questions were also used for instructors and staff. For equestrians, these questions were modified to focus on why people choose to ride, barriers to participation and to what extent they were aware of and engaged with the Horse Strategy).

Date: 7th November 2007 Final Version 3

Appendix XVII: Follow-up Interviews: riding centre proprietors/yard managers

Core Questions

1. Since our last discussion, has awareness and engagement with the Horse Strategy increased?
2. Have you noticed any changes in the way the horse-world operates during the implementation phase of the Horse Strategy?
3. What improvements have you experienced in terms of communication networks with the equine organisations?
4. Are overheads and legislation still impacting on the business growth?
5. How has the economic climate, particularly in view of the recent inclement weather affected your business?
6. Have you noticed a decrease in participation?
7. How do you market your business to attract new participants?
8. Has marketing increased participation?
9. Have these factors caused you to re-evaluate the way you operate your business?
10. Have you taken any business training to promote your business better and increase your customer base?
11. Have you made any redundancies or lost staff?
12. Do you receive better support from the BHIC and Defra?
13. What additional support from the horse industry would you like to receive?
14. How do you view the future for riding centres, increasing participation and engagement with the Horse Strategy?
15. What recommendations would you suggest to the BHIC and Defra to ensure that the Horse Strategy is successfully implemented?
16. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding increasing participation in equestrianism and engagement with the Horse Strategy?

Date: 4th January 2010 Final Version

Appendix XVIII: Diary Pack

Confidentiality Letter - research participant diary sheet letter (on headed paper)

DOCTORAL STUDY AT XXX RIDING CENTRE

Further to my conversation with you recently at the XXX Riding Centre, please find enclosed the "Diary Pack" this includes:

1. Consent Form to take part in the study, required by Durham University"s Ethics Committee.
2. Initial Form – gaining background details to engaging in riding.
3. Diary Sheets – to be completed after each riding session where possible or weekly (if more sheets are required, please contact me via email or telephone; please see the foot of this letter).
4. SAE to return all of the forms once completed to the researcher.

The Doctoral Study, in part, focuses on social aspects of riding, for example what influenced you to commence and continue riding? In addition, examining any barriers to your participation, such as the cost of lessons or clothing? Any information you can provide will be extremely useful and assist in the development of this study.

Participation is entirely voluntary and confidential. No personal details will be included and the identity of the riding centre will be concealed by use of a pseudonym thus strengthening the anonymity of the participant.

If there are any queries or you happen to change your mind regarding participation in the study, please feel free to contact me via the options below.

Best wishes

Karen Elliott
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School of Applied Social Sciences
c/o 50 Pilgrims Way
Gilesgate
Durham
DH1 1HQ
Tel: 0790 5013268 Email: karen.elliott@durham.ac.uk

Date: 5th November 2007 Version 2

Research Participant Consent Form – Diary sheet/interviews (on headed paper)

Doctoral Study:

"Policy implementation as a wicked problem: A study of the horse-world"

Doctoral Student: Miss Karen Elliott

CONSENT FORM

This is to confirm that I understand the research purpose and have agreed to take part.

Please tick box to indicate the following:

I have received sufficient information about the project and what my involvement will entail ☐

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions of the researcher and have received satisfactory answers ☐

I understand that I may take part in as much or as little of the research as I choose without having to give any reasons ☐

I understand that I may withdraw from the research at any time without having to give a reason and with no negative consequences to myself ☐

I agree to take part in this study ☐

Name: …….. Signature: …….. Date: ……..

(Participant)

Date: 5th November 2007 Version 1

Diary front sheet for participants (customers) – (on headed paper)

Diary Front Sheets - Customer

Name:	
Age:	
Date:	
Riding Centre:	
When did you start riding? How often and on what day(s) do you ride?	
What made you interested in participating in riding?	
What made you choose XXX Riding Centre?	
Which is your favourite Pony/Horse and why?	
Please list your feelings about riding – for example, please give details: Did you enjoy your lesson? Is so what aspects inspire you to keep riding? Do you like having contact with your horse? What is your favourite part of riding?	
Please use this area to write any comments you want to about riding and what riding means to you? For example, what are you goals? To develop an understanding of your horse, compete, hack, etc?	

Do you think riding is good value for money?
Does the cost of riding restrict the number of times you can participate?
Please use this space to add any additional comments: For example, what are your long term goals of riding? Such as competing, owning your own pony/horse? Do you think equine events, clothing and participation are expensive?

Thank you for taking part in this study.
Karen Elliott, Doctoral Student, Durham University, School for Applied Social Sciences,
c/o 50 Pilgrims Way, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 1HQ
Tel 0790 5013268 karen.elliott@durham.ac.uk

Date: 5th November 2007 Version 1

Diary front sheet for livery participants (on headed paper)

Diary Front Sheet - Livery

Name: Horse"s Name:	
Age:	
Date:	
Riding Centre:	XXX Riding Centre [LIVERY]
When did you start riding?	
What made you interested in participating in riding?	
What made you choose XXX Riding Centre as the place to keep your horse? For example: the facilities, staff, atmosphere?	
How long have you stabled your horse at XXX?	
Please list your feelings about riding – for example, please give details: Did you enjoy your lesson? Is so, what elements inspire you to continue riding? Do you like having contact with your horse? What factor made you decide to purchase your own horse?	
Please use this area to write any comments in relation to What are you goals? To develop an understanding of your horse, compete, hack, etc?	

Do you think riding is good value for money?
Have recent economic trends had an impact on keeping your horse and your ability to engage in lessons or competitions?
Please use this space to add any additional comments: For example, Do you think equine events, clothing and participation are expensive? Do you believe horses have personalities? Is XXX a friendly centre to keep your horse? Thank you for taking part in this study. Karen Elliott, Doctoral Student, Durham University, School for Applied Social Sciences, c/o 50 Pilgrims Way, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 1HQ Tel 0790 5013268 karen.elliott@durham.ac.uk Date: 5th November 2007 Version 2

Diary Sheets - customers

Name:	
Age:	
Date:	
Riding Centre:	

Your weekly comments on your riding lessons e.g. Feelings about the horse? How your riding is developing? What you experience, i.e. fear, happiness, etc?

Thank you for taking part in this study.

Karen Elliott, Doctoral Student, Durham University, School of Applied Social Sciences, 50 Pilgrims Way, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 1HQ Tel 0790 5013268
karen.elliott@durham.ac.uk

Diary Sheet - Livery

Name: Horse"s name:	
Age:	
Date:	
Riding Centre:	

Please comment on riding your horse, either competitively, for leisure or during a lesson. In addition, please describe you experience of what it is like to be a livery at XXXX in comparison to other riding centres.

Thank you for taking part in this study.
Karen Elliott, Doctoral Student, Durham University, School of Applied Social Sciences, 50 Pilgrims Way, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 1HQ Tel 0790 5013268, karen.elliott@durham.ac.uk

Reminder letter for respondent diary sheet information (on headed paper)

Dear XXX,

DOCTORAL STUDY – HORSE INDUSTRY

Further to our recent conversations and correspondence, regarding completing the "Diary Pack" for my study at the XXX riding centre. I am writing to check that you are still in a position to continue with the diary sheets and will forward the completed 10 sheets in the stamped addressed envelope provided with the pack?

To reiterate, the Doctoral Study, in part, focuses on social aspects of riding including what influenced you to commence and maintain riding; feelings of fear, social skills gained from riding, such as responsibility, respect, and so forth, these subjects are all interesting and relevant to the research. In addition, the study aims to assess the extent to which social or economic barriers, such as the cost of lessons or clothing impact on the level of your participation. Any information you can provide with regard to the above subjects will prove extremely useful.

If there are any queries or problems with the sheets, please do not hesitate to contact me via the options stated below.

Again, thank you for participating,

Best wishes

Karen Elliott
Doctoral Student
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DH1 1HQ
Tel: 0790 5013268 Email: karen.elliott@durham.ac.uk

Date: 17th December 2007 Version 1

Appendix XIX: Participant Profiles

Background:

Rider (Age):

Occupation:

Length of time riding:

Choice of centre:

Activities:

Category: Novice/Intermediate/Advanced

Engagement: Leisure/Competitive

Horses owned: Yes (How many?)/No

Key areas:

- ***Determinants of Participation***
- ***Participant"s view of their riding experience***
- ***Instructor"s views on participant***
- ***Barriers to participation***
- ***Participant"s reflections on their overall equestrian experience***
- ***Views on the leisure-sector/horse-world and the wider industry***

Appendix XX: BHS Milestones

1947	• The British Horse Society is founded through the amalgamation of the National Horse Association and the Institute of the Horse and Pony Club Ltd.
1947- 48	• The Society"s subscription income totals £4,497.
1948	• Britain"s first three day event - as part of the Olympics - at Aldershot. • The first Preliminary Instructor"s exam is held at Porlock. Membership reaches 5,067.
1949	• The first Badminton Horse Trials is staged. • Pony Club membership nears 20,000 with 197 branches.
1953	• The British Riding Clubs movement is founded. • The 1953 accounts show a turnover of £28,273 and a profit of £1,059.
1954	• Membership rises to 5,697. • HM the Queen becomes The Society"s Patron.
1956	• Great Britain is represented at dressage for the first time at the Olympics (Stockholm) and the British team wins the three day event gold medal. (Col Weldon, Maj Rook and Bertie Hill).
1957	• The Society"s International Show becomes the Royal International Horse Show. Held at the White City, the attendance is in excess of 100,000.
1961	• The Dressage Group is founded and issues its first newsletter. • The Approval of riding schools begins.
1962	• The Society is granted charitable status.
1964	• The Horse & Pony Breeds Committee is formed.
1965	• The first official endurance ride in the UK, the Golden Horseshoe Ride over Exmoor, is organised by the Society and sponsored by *The Sunday Telegraph.* • First meeting of the Scottish Committee of The British Horse Society is held at the University of Edinburgh Staff Club.

1966	• The Society accepts an offer from the Royal Agricultural Society of a plot of land at Stoneleigh for the construction of offices and an indoor riding school, to provide the nucleus of a National Equestrian Centre.
1967	• In January, Dorian Williams, Hon. Director of the BHS, cuts the first turf on the site of the new headquarters. • In May, the Society"s office block opens.
1968	• The indoor school is completed.
1972	• The Combined Driving Group is founded. • The British Equestrian Federation is formed with the British Show Jumping Association.
1973	• The first CDI (international dressage show).
1974	• The Access and Rights of Way department (originally known as the Bridleways Office) is set up.
1976	• The Intermediate Instructor qualification is introduced.
1977	• The Welfare Department"s Rescue and Rehabilitation Scheme is introduced. • The inaugural meeting of the welfare committee of the English Committee is held, under Mrs. Marjorie Langford"s chairmanship. She chaired the committee until January 1997.
1978	• Combined Training changes its name to Horse Trials. • The first *Riding and Road Safety Manual* is published - price 30p.
1980	• Jennie Loriston-Clarke, riding Dutch Courage, becomes the first British rider to win a championship medal for dressage when she takes the individual bronze at the International Festival, Goodwood.
1983	• The first *BHS Yearbook* is produced, superseding the diaries of previous years.
1984	• The Medical Equestrian Association is founded.
1986	• The "Stages" examination structure is introduced.
1990	• Vaulting is accepted as a discipline of the Society.
1991	• ARROW project launched. The first in the "On Horseback" series,

	Cotswolds on Horseback, is published.
1995	• The turnover of the Book & Gift shop exceeds £½ million for the first time.
1996	• The Escort Certificate and British Equestrian Tourism qualifications are introduced.
1996–97	• Projected subscription income: £1,678,000; membership exceeds 65,000.
1997	• The Society celebrates its Golden Jubilee Year. • HRH The Prince of Wales becomes President. Horse Trials, horse driving trials, endurance riding and vaulting are taken over by new, independent associations, and the Pony Club becomes a new company with charitable status • The BHS relocates to Stoneleigh Deer Park and a National Rescue Centre opens at Welford.
1998	• British Dressage becomes independent but British Riding Clubs decide their future remains with the BHS. • BHS becomes the governing body for TREC competitions in the UK. • HRH The Princess Royal becomes President of The Society.
1999	• The Princess Royal opens the new Rescue Centre at Oxhill. • Access Week is launched and helps raise the profile of riders" and carriage drivers" needs for safe off road riding. • The pilot BHS Hunter Trials series is launched in the South East and is warmly welcomed. • Riding Schools department restructures. The BHS website and magazine are taken in-house and the Book Shop goes "online".
2000	• New Trade Membership package launched. • BHS Degree Course receives verification. • First "Lawrence of Arabia" Challengers return from Jordan. • First Access Week. • BHS becomes an Awarding Body recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to offer qualifications accredited into the National Qualifications Framework.
2001	• The first lap of the H25 London Orbital Riding Route is opened in

	South Mimms, Hertfordshire. • Foot and Mouth hits the Country and BHS events and competitions are put on hold. • Good Practice and Child Protection courses are launched. • A campaign to remove VAT from riding hats begins, and a new student membership scheme is initiated. • The BHS TREC team secures Team Silver at the TREC World Championships in Belgium, and the Welfare department unveils new challenge rides to Peru and Iceland.
2002	• Early in 2002 the BHS is invited to join the Rural Affairs Forum in England by Defra Minister, The Rt. Hon. Alun Michael. • The Safety department launches training for Riding and Road Safety Trainers, and the first Equine Specific First Aid courses begin. • A feather in the Riding & Road Safety cap are the radio & TV adverts, produced by the Department of Transport as part of their "Think" campaign, to educate motorists on how to drive near horses. • The Examinations department develops a Junior version of the Progressive Riding Tests. • The BHS becomes an official Passport Issuing Organisation. • The Livery Yard Approval scheme is launched at the Royal International Horse Show. • The Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire sections of the Sabrina Way are opened by HRH The Princess Royal.
2003	• British Riding Clubs European Championships gain FEI status. • BHS Welfare moves forward into a policy of educating people in order to prevent cases of cruelty and neglect happening. • The rescue centre closes as the BHS works with the Blue Cross to provide homes for rescue cases at their sanctuaries. Regional rescue work continues, and safe houses are found for animals who need them. • The Tweed Trails in Scotland open. • An All Party Parliamentary Group is formed in England.

	• The Three Downs Long Distance route is officially opened. • A Hungarian Challenge is now on offer from the Welfare department. • The BHSAI is accredited by the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). • The BHS initiated Ragwort Control Bill passes through Parliament and gains Royal Assent. • The BHS moves into the future with the launch of the monthly e-newsletter British Horse online.
2004	• The Welfare Department publishes the first issue of BHS Equi-Care magazine, and works alongside the Laminitis Trust to promote a "BHS Equi Weight Watchers" campaign, aimed at reducing the number of obese horses and ponies, and the incidence of Laminitis. • The BHS Ragwort Control Act became law in February, paving the way for a Code of Conduct on how to prevent the spread of the weed. • The Society welcomes Graham Cory as Chief Executive, and Patrick Print as Chairman. Noel Edmonds also joins the Society as President. • The BHS is invited to become part of the Hunter "Giving Welly" initiate. • An equestrian insurance working group is formed, to tackle the plight of riding schools and increasing insurance premiums. • The BHS Safety Department tackles the issue of Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) road surface dressing and works in partnership with County Surveyors Society to combat the problem.
2005	• BHS membership hits 60,000 • BHS Equestrian Hall of Fame is launched. • The Three Rivers Ride is opened • To resolve problems surrounding low flying helicopters a free phone helpline, 0800 515544, is launched to assist riders. • Operation Bright Eyes proves that riders wearing fluorescent clothing allows pilots to see them sooner.
2006	• Sefton Awards move back to the Barracks. • Exmoor on Horseback revisions produce a pilot for rolling out a

	new format of long distance route details across the UK. • BHS Stage 3 and PTT get accredited by UCAS. • The Radnor Forest Ride route is opened. • The Safety Department launches a new interactive CD-Rom,
2007	• Equestrian Qualifications GB Limited, a subsidiary company of the BHS is the new Awarding Body for BHS and S/NVQ qualifications. • The Level 1 and Level 2 (UKCC Endorsed) Coaching Certificates were accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority into the National Qualifications Framework. • The Preliminary Teaching Test now incorporates the Level 2 UKCC endorsed Coaching Certificate. The PTT "log Book" was replaced by a "portfolio". • The BHS Equitation and Teaching Certificate was held in Ireland for the first time. • Riding & Road Safety Training Programme was awarded a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award
2008	• BHS membership hits all time high of 70,000 • The Stage 2 and Stage 3 Care exams are included in the Additional and Specialist Learning Catalogue for the 14-19 Specialised Diploma. • The Intermediate Teaching Test now incorporates the Level 3 UKCC endorsed Coaching Certificate. • The Stage 3 Horse Knowledge and Care and the BHS Intermediate Instructor Certificate are extended on the National Qualifications Framework until December 2010 • Riding & Road Safety Test accredited by Qualifications & Curriculum Authority as part of National Qualification Framework.

Appendix XXI: Horse Industry Structure

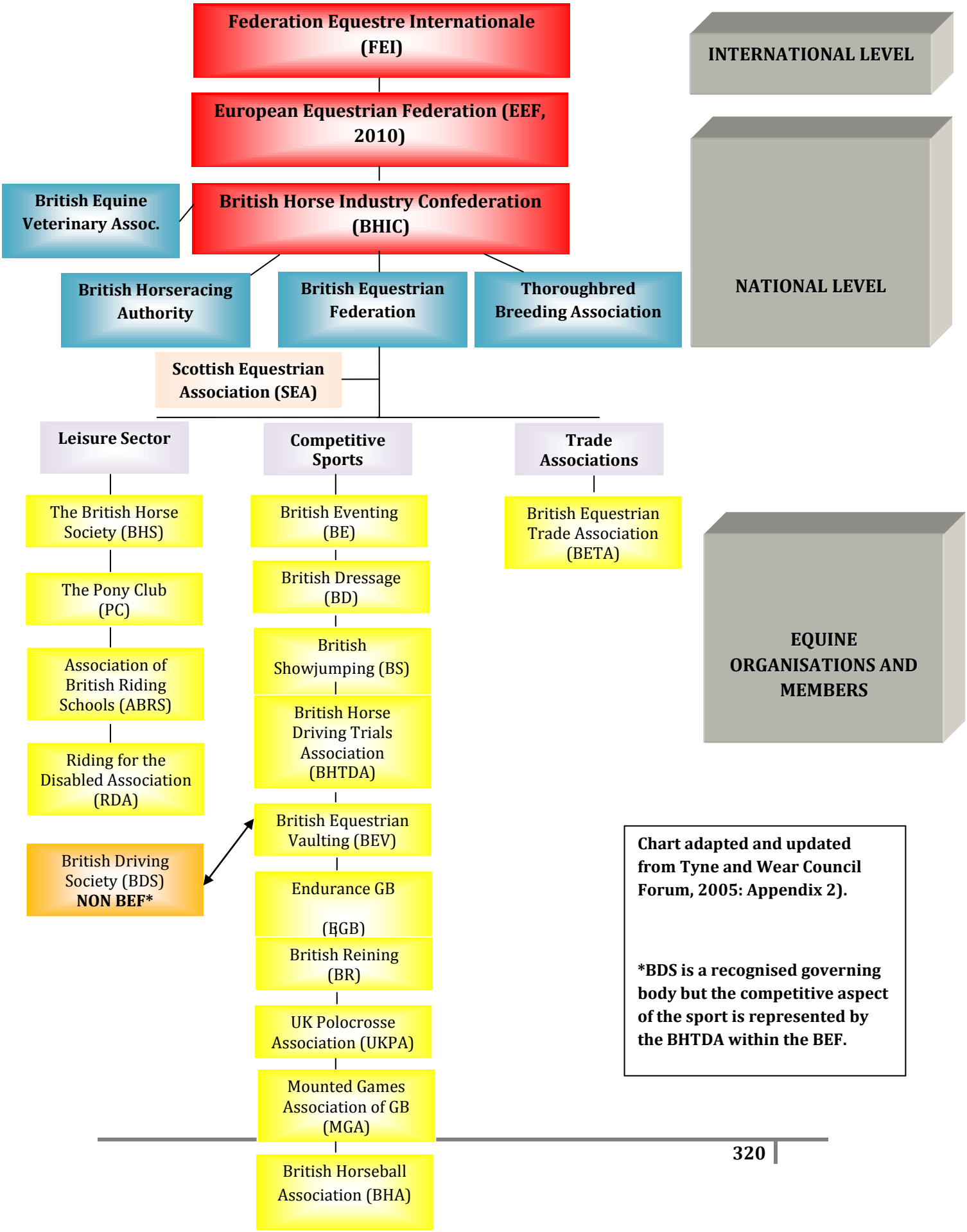


Chart adapted and updated from Tyne and Wear Council Forum, 2005: Appendix 2).

***BDS is a recognised governing body but the competitive aspect of the sport is represented by the BHTDA within the BEF.**

Appendix XXII: BHS Membership details

BHS Riding Centre Approval Scheme and individual membership: benefits

Riding Centre and Livery Yard Scheme:

- Recognised industry standard for equestrianism
- Approved (A), Commended (C) and Highly Commended (HC) status from 2011 (BHS., 2011).
- 24-hour access to equestrian business support helpline.
- A 25% discount on insurance with SEIB;
- Enter the cashback scheme – for each new BHS member recruited a reward voucher of £5 is given, run Junior and Progressive Riding Tests
- Free Bronze Membership for one year for those who complete Levels 1-6 or levels of the PRT or 1-5 levels of the JPRT;
- Run Riding School Assistant Certificate of Competence – free Bronze Membership for one year for those who complete;
- 30% discount on BHS Membership for those training for BHS qualifications at the establishment;
- The opportunity to take part in the BHS Equitation Competition for non-horse owners;
- A limited offer of bursaries of £150 are available for BHS Exams and Equestrian Tourism Exams;
- Staff can be registered on the Register of Instructors Category E (without insurance) for £26
- Receive discounts from equestrian trade members – Abbey view Equine, Blue Chip and Mirrors for Training currently offer discounts to BHS Approved Centres;
- Publicity – BHS website listing and links to your own website, "British Horse" magazine and EMAGIN (a riding GIS mapping facility);
- BHS Approved establishments are able to advertise in the BHS Corporate Advertisement in Yellow Pages at a discounted rate;
- Hold BHS Examinations and Equestrian Tourism Qualification Exams;

- Receive regular mailings to of current equine business issues; networking within industry; preferential rates conferences and conventions;
- BHS book discounts;
- Planning support letters available free of charge.
- Finally, the proprietor automatically qualifies for "silver" individual membership

Individual membership benefits:

- Public Liability Insurance up to £10 million. Terms, conditions and territorial limits apply (Gold members only).
- Personal Accident Insurance up to £10,000. Terms, conditions and territorial limits apply (Gold members only).
- **British Horse** magazine delivered to your door six times per year. Our exclusive members" magazine is packed with horsey news, features and competitions (Bronze members receive two copies per year)
- Special offers throughout the year, including a free ticket to the Royal International Horse Show at Hickstead (Gold and Silver members only)
- A welcome pack with membership card and car sticker
- Access to BHS exams (Gold members only)
- Access to free helplines for all legal, VAT and tax queries (Gold members only)
- Free expert advice and guidance on a wide range of equestrian matters
- Local committees dedicated to organising events in your area and campaigning on local issues important to you.

There is an option for a one-off lifetime Gold membership payment ranging from £2,904 for age 0-9 years to £357 for age 65 or over.

Corporate membership:

- Excludes the insurance and liability which is replaced with discounted rates on taking the BHS Riding and Road Safety Tests for employees and the ability to adopt the BHS logo for public affiliation and marketing purposes for £120 per annum.

Trade membership:

- Targets associated supply-chain businesses, tack shops, feed merchants and so forth for £250 per annum. Benefits include free Gold membership for one person, use of the affiliated logo and inclusion on EMAGIN the GIS mapping facility maintained by the BHS open to all their members and affiliated organisations.

BHS. (2011), *Approval Pack*, Kenilworth: British Horse Society.

Appendix XXIII: ABRS Membership details

Benefits:

- Listing on the ABRS central website and appear in literature as an Approved Centre and recognised for the quality of your service to every standard of rider
- Display the ABRS approvals plaque
- Eligible to run the Association"s popular equitation and stable management tests; take part in conferences and training sessions designed to help your business reach its full potential
- Networking within the equestrian industry - the ABRS is represented on the BEF and has close ties with other key national equestrian bodies; communicate members needs and concerns to local and national government
- Benefit from ABRS marketing initiatives - including national advertising and editorial placement
- Assistance to model press releases for you to use to promote activities at your own centre

Appendix XXIV: Participant Profiles

Key areas – included in the case study:

- ***Determinants of Participation***
- ***Participant"s view of their riding experience***
- ***Instructor"s views on participant***
- ***Barriers to participation***
- ***Participant"s reflections on their overall equestrian experience***
- ***Views on the leisure-sector/horse-world and the wider industry***

EQUUS

Profile 1: The nervous adult rider

Rider (Age):	Alicia (37)
Occupation:	Housewife
Length of time riding:	18 Months
Choice of centre:	Watched the television documentary about the Riding Centre
Activities:	Lessons twice per week (Group - Tuesday/ Thursday), Adult riding club (Sunday am) Volunteers Monday-Friday 10-3pm
Category:	Level 3 - Beginner-Novice
Engagement:	Leisure/recreational riders
Horses owned:	None

Profile 2: "Gallop to Learn" Rider

Rider (Age):	Gareth (14)
Occupation:	School pupil
Length of time riding:	Never ridden before attending course
Choice of centre:	Part of a school social project for anti-social pupils
Activities:	Attend Mondays once per week for horse management (am) and a riding lesson (pm) for a period of 6 weeks
Category:	Level 1 – Beginner
Engagement:	Leisure/recreational rider
Horses owned:	None

HENGST

Profile 1: "The Family"

Riders (Age):	Lisa (9), Tracy (40), James (42)
Occupation:	Tracy: Administrator; James: Self-employed
Length of time riding:	Lisa - 11 months, Tracy and James – 5 months
Choice of centre:	Proximity to home
Activities:	Lessons – Lisa twice per week (Group - Wednesday / Saturday) Parents 1-2 per month (private), schooling and hacking
Category:	Beginner-Novice
Engagement:	Leisure/recreational riders
Horses owned:	Lady and Theo, stabled at Hengst

Profile 2: Regular participant

Riders (Age):	Adele (9)
Occupation:	Parents: Retail assistants
Length of time riding:	2 years

Choice of centre: Proximity to home (walking distance)

Activities: Private lesson – once per week (Wednesdays - 4pm)
Pony Club – (Tuesdays – 5-6/7pm)

Category: Novice

Engagement: Leisure/recreational rider

Horses owned: None

FOHLEN

Profile 1: The "scared" rider

Riders (Age): Penny (46)

Occupation: Police Officer

Length of time riding: 13 years

Choice of centre: Facilities, land and instructors

Activities: Private lessons (Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays)
Days and times vary due to shift patterns at work

Category: Intermediate

Engagement: Leisure/recreational rider

Horses owned: Red, stabled at Fohlen

Profile 2: Adult Rider

Riders (Age): Liz (52)

Occupation: Local Government Manager

Length of time riding: 9 years

Choice of centre: Recommended by a colleague at work
Activities: Private lesson – once per week (Fridays)
Group lesson – once per week (Sundays)

Category: Novice/Intermediate

Engagement: Leisure/recreational rider

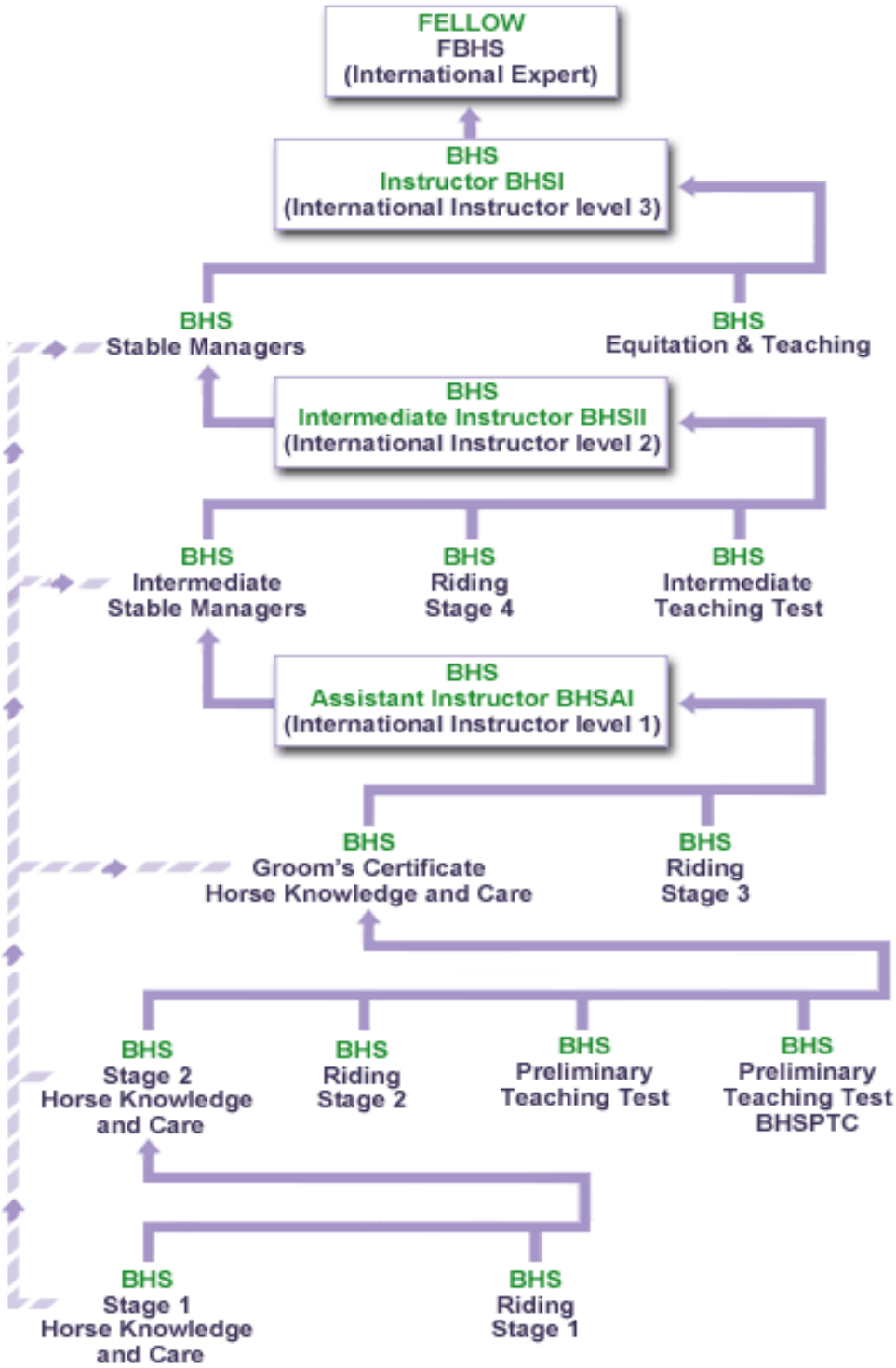
Horses owned: None

CAVALLO

Profile 1: "Happy Hacker"

Riders (Age):	Pete (65)
Occupation:	Clinical Dentist (self-employed)
Length of time riding:	3.5 years
Choice of centre:	Recommended by a friend
Activities:	Occasional lessons/clinics Hacking/hunt member
Category:	Novice
Engagement:	Leisure/recreational rider
Horses owned:	Thor and Moon, stabled at Cavallo

Appendix XXV: BHS Stages



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