



**British Equestrian Federation Press Release**

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**MAJOR COMMITMENT TO THE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES**

The BEF and its Member Bodies have produced the first ever *Facilities Strategy for Equestrian Sport and Recreation* as a collaborative project across the equestrian industry, supported by Sport England.

The strategy establishes a coherent approach to supporting and developing facilities, encouraging participation at all levels and enabling riders, drivers and vaulters to develop to their full potential. It includes many examples of good practice and details venue specifications for all competition disciplines and a comprehensive guide to funding.

BEF Consultant Director of Facilities, Tim Hadaway, said: "The strategy's publication represents a key milestone for the BEF and shows how effectively the industry is now working together to address the challenges facing facility providers. This is not only about ensuring we develop world class training and competition facilities in the run up to the 2012 Olympics, but how we support, improve and develop the many hundreds of facilities that underpin all equestrian activity."

The results of the National Equestrian Survey 2006 support the need for a coherent facilities strategy with 10% of lapsed riders suggesting they had stopped riding due to a lack of local facilities. Additionally, of those who had never ridden, 16% cited lack of opportunity/local facilities as the main barriers to them taking up the sport.

Helping facility providers to access the funding they need for improvements is a key part of the document. It highlights a range of investment opportunities including more training facilities for Horse Driving Trials, appropriate surfaces for the sport of Reining and competition venues for Endurance riding in certain parts of the country. The strategy also outlines ongoing efforts to address business rates, insurance costs and planning restrictions.

The strategy commits the BEF to developing a National Facilities Database which will be a vital tool for promoting participation, identifying gaps in provision, and helping to improve communications with providers of all types and levels of facility. In parallel to this the Member Bodies will be working together to develop a comprehensive and consistent approach to facility accreditation.

A National Equestrian Institute is also proposed thus creating a hub for developing excellence in coaching, volunteering, leadership and development of the sport horse. Although an embryonic idea at this stage, work will continue over the next 12 months to define the concept, draw up specifications and put in place the systems that will see this created.

“A great deal of work has gone into the development of this plan, particularly in ensuring it is a plan for all the BEF Member Bodies. But it is more than that, it is a plan to help and support the entire industry,” said Andrew Finding, BEF Chief Executive.

The strategy is available to download from the BEF website at [www.bef.co.uk](http://www.bef.co.uk)

### **Editors' notes**

The BEF Member bodies are: British Dressage, British Eventing, British Show Jumping Association, British Equestrian Vaulting, British Horse Driving Trials Association, British Reining, Endurance GB, British Horse Society, The Pony Club, Association of British Riding Schools, British Equestrian Trade Association, Scottish Equestrian Association, Riding for the Disabled Association.

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