1. The British Horseracing Authority (BHA), as the governing and regulatory body of thoroughbred horseracing in Great Britain, is responding to this inquiry on behalf of our stakeholders including the 59 racecourses that operate throughout Britain, 51 of which are located in England.

2. British Racing is an industry with an annual economic impact of £3.45 billion, providing over 85,000 FTE jobs and attracting over 6 million spectators to its racecourses in 2015.¹

3. Major racing events have a significant economic impact on their local areas. The Cheltenham Festival is worth over £100 million to the local economy according to research undertaken during the 2015 Festival.² In 2013, Ascot racecourse found that more than 10% of its attendees (approx. 50,000 people) travelled over 100 miles to attend racing, including from overseas, which contributed to the £8 million spent on accommodation and £13 million on transport in that year as well as further significant spend in the local pubs, cafes and restaurants in the local area.³

4. Smaller racecourses located in more remote, rural areas also play a significant role in the social and economic life of that area, attracting visitors and therefore boosting the local economy. Indeed, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Andrea Leadsom MP, has noted that there is little tourism in her constituency “but for the notable exception of the Grand Prix week and the major races at Towcester racecourse”.⁴

5. Overall, British Racing attracts a vast range of tourists, from High Net Worth international visitors attending Royal Ascot, to groups travelling over from Ireland in their thousands for the Cheltenham Festival to British families visiting Cartmel racecourse on their camping holiday over the August bank holiday.

6. The Government’s new sport strategy, ‘A Sporting Future’, demonstrates its commitment to a joined-up approach across Government departments in recognition of the wide-ranging role British sporting events and infrastructure play within Britain. As Britain’s second largest sport as well as an important rural industry, British Racing welcomes the opportunity to participate in this EFRA Select Committee inquiry and would encourage DEFRA to continue to work in a co-ordinated manner with

² http://cheltenham.thejockeyclub.co.uk/more-information/news/the-festivaltm-worth-over-100m-to-the-gloucestershire-economy
⁴ http://www.andrealeadsom.com/home/the-constituency
Departments such as DCMS, BEIS, DCLG and HM Treasury, to ensure that sports such as British Racing are maximising their potential in contributing to British rural life.

Marketing

7. In locations where there is a significant horseracing presence, dedicated agencies have been established to promote Racing tourism to the area based around a visit to the racecourses or tours round training yards and studs to meet our equine stars. These include Go Racing in Yorkshire⁵ and Discover Newmarket.⁶

8. It is important that these local agencies form part of a central network to ensure promotional efforts are not being duplicated and central promotion of regions and areas over specific places or attractions would be welcomed.

9. Since 2009, the Racecourse Association, the trade body for British racecourses, has partnered with VisitEngland to provide a Quality Assured Racecourse Scheme in which racecourses undergo independent assessment by VisitEngland to guarantee quality of visitor attraction. Accreditation from a trusted and recognised body such as VisitEngland is a significant boost for rural destinations in attracting tourists from home and abroad.⁷

Transport and Infrastructure

10. Efficient and robust transport links are crucial to any rural area and its ability to attract tourism. Racecourses with weaker public transport links suffer from the high volumes of traffic which results from a race meeting, particularly during peak times. For instance, the current rail services to Newmarket could be greatly enhanced. The considerable racing infrastructure in the area including two racecourses, Tattersalls sales house, training yards and the British Racing School attract visitors throughout the year with visitor numbers expected to grow by 45,000 in the 12 months following the opening of the new £12.8 million National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art at the end of 2016. The current rail service does not reflect Newmarket as a high-profile town and the centre for horseracing.

11. Decision making and planning application processes can always be simplified and quickened. If an area needs investment in infrastructure it would be greatly beneficial if decisions could be made in months rather than years.

Local area

12. A number of our racecourses have highlighted, as does this inquiry, that a balance needs to be struck between efficient and easy access for visitors while maintaining the rights and privacy of local residents and land owners. Engaging and consulting with local focus

⁵ http://goracing.co.uk/
⁶ http://www.discovernewmarket.co.uk/pages/index.php
groups will ensure decisions are made with a greater understanding of the character and specific community needs of that area.

13. Identifying the particular skills required by the region and ensuring that local colleges and universities are providing training and apprenticeships specific to the employment needs of the area will ensure that the sectors active in these local areas are provided with enough people with the right skills to support customers and businesses. In British Racing for example, the areas of Newmarket and Lambourn are built around and are synonymous with horseracing, and the rural community and economy is heavily dependent on the racecourses and wider racing infrastructure in the area.

**Funding**

14. The Government is currently at a critical stage in the process of replacing British Racing’s outdated funding mechanism from betting activity, the Horserace Betting Levy, which requires closing a damaging loophole which has meant off-shore, remote bookmakers have not been required to pay a return to British Racing from bets taken on the sport.

15. British Racing warmly welcomed the announcement in March that the Government would replace the current system and ‘restore to racing a fair contribution from all operators, which has been lost simply because of the shift towards remote betting.’

A return to levels received prior to the growth of online gambling will see Racing’s funding from betting return to levels of £100 million and allow the industry and its racecourses to maintain and improve the levels of service and facilities they provide to visitors and allow investment in promotional activity, attracting visitors to those courses and their surrounding areas.

16. British Racing is very optimistic for the future of our industry once this important measure is introduced.

17. We would therefore greatly appreciate the EFRA Committee’s support for this important policy as it approaches its final stage, which has significant implications for a number of areas of the Committee’s remit.

*September 2016*

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