



**Devon Countryside Access Forum
c/o Public Rights of Way team
Great Moor House
Bittern Road
Sowton
EXETER EX2 7NL**

**Tel: 07837 171000
01392 382771**

devoncaf@devon.gov.uk

www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf

Mr S Bates
Green Infrastructure Project Manager
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
Border Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate
HONITON
EX14 1EJ

20 March 2023

Dear Mr Bates

New green space at Broadclyst

The Devon Countryside Access Forum wishes to make the following comments on the proposed green space at Broadclyst. This response will be on the agenda for formal approval at the next meeting on 24 April.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes the purchase of this land to increase provision for recreational access between Exeter and Cranbrook. The proven physical and mental benefits of walking, cycling and outdoor activities are well documented. The proposals will also contribute to sustainable transport networks. The variety in habitats that will be created will add to enjoyment of the site and the landscape.

Footpath network and multi-use trail

Footpaths through the site and an all-ability trail are welcomed. The entrance from the car park to the all-ability trail should also allow easy access for disabled users (mobility-scooter and wheelchair users and those using reclining/adapted cycles) and those with pushchairs. It is important that the surfacing allows all-year round use and a firm unbound surface is preferable to tarmac for all these routes. The all-ability trail should be sufficiently wide to permit disabled users and people with pushchairs to pass pedestrians and dog walkers. The boardwalks will enable greater use of the paths throughout the year but these should have a non-slip surface. The Forum's position statement on Disability Access is attached.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum. It is required, in accordance with Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment.

It is unclear whether the multi-use trail includes equestrian use and the DCAF would be grateful if you could confirm this, particularly as one of the presentation slides of a multi-use trail elsewhere showed horses. Mention is made in the presentation of segregating the trail over its 3m width. The DCAF advises that a wider width would enable better segregation rather than having two very narrow paths for cyclists and walkers, particularly as this trail would be used by people with wheelchairs, mobility scooters or pushchairs, family cycling groups with children who may not be confident cyclists and dog walkers.

The DCAF would welcome additional information on the multi-use trail, where it extends either side of the green space and whether funding from developer contributions or other funding streams is already in place. This is particularly important to allow the trail to be widely used and potentially provide a sustainable transport link to places of employment and elsewhere.

Grazing

The Forum acknowledges that grazing would assist management and biodiversity of the site. However, consideration needs to be given to the type of cattle so that breeds known for their docility are used.

Dogs

The site will be used by a large number of dog walkers, not all of whom will know how to manage their dog around cattle and not all will have dogs that are under close control. It would be helpful to know whether it is proposed to have a requirement for dogs to be on lead when the site is being grazed. Devon Loves Dogs or other staff involvement on a frequent basis would be helpful to encourage people to pick up after their dog and to keep dogs under close control. Ensuring the site offers dog walking but allows other users to enjoy other benefits such as bird watching could be challenging. The design for the green space should include dog bins and the cost of maintaining these should be incorporated in the overall long term maintenance costs for the site.

Car parks

The Devon Countryside Access Forum has previously advised that car parks associated with green spaces should have a rural feel. Tarmac car parks can create a landscape that is very urban. In this respect, option 3 (all gravel), perhaps with timber to delineate spaces, or possibly option 2 (part tarmac) would be preferable. The Forum welcomes dedicated provision for disabled parking and cycles. Given the smallness of the car parking area there may be an impact on the surrounding roads.

The design and placing of bollards between the multi-use trail and the car park needs to be carefully considered to ensure they do not present a safety hazard for cyclists and walkers and in particular children.

Sustainable access to the site

The Forum notes with regret that walking and cycling from the current developed area of Cranbrook to the site is not safe and advises that this should be explored as a priority to encourage sustainable travel. This should be planned into the westward extension to

Cranbrook which will be much closer to the green space. This appears to be indicated on the plan but no detail is given.

Education and volunteering

The DCAF strongly supports the role of education and volunteering on the site. The DCAF has frequently advised that education is critical so that children understand the countryside and learn to use it responsibly. Achieving a degree of community investment in the project will also help the site to be well-maintained. Engagement with other groups such as the Devon Loves Dogs project would be useful.

The Forum assumes its comments will be incorporated in any consultation report, alongside responses to the online survey.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would welcome feedback on its comments.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum

Chair: Sarah Slade

Vice Chair: Chris Cole

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” The Act specifies section(94)4 bodies that the forum has a duty to advise and these include district councils.

The DCAF currently has nineteen members, appointed by Devon County Council, who represent the interests of landowners/managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.