



**Devon Countryside Access Forum
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Ms L Holloway
Principal Transport Planning Officer
Transport Planning, Room 120
Devon County Council
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter EX2 4QD

30 March 2023

Dear Ms Holloway

Exeter Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes initiatives which will encourage greater use of sustainable travel. It is not commenting on the proposals for specified walking and cycling routes outlined in the consultation document. However, there are some general points which the Forum would like to raise which are pertinent to the development of the overall Plan.

There is a particular emphasis within this LCWIP on improved infrastructure focussed on travel to work and school, i.e. commuting. Whilst benefits to health and well-being from walking and cycling are firmly acknowledged within the associated documentation greater emphasis on cycling and walking routes for leisure, recreation and access to green space and the countryside would be welcome.

For example, the long standing and well used Exeter Green Circle route is not referred to or included within the proposed planned route improvements. Routes such as the Green Circle route and other public rights of way provide additional opportunities, within the city boundaries, to access open countryside. Cycling (and walking) for recreation and leisure can provide the confidence, equipment and motivation to cycle (and walk) more frequently for travel to work purposes.

Whilst the background document recognises the potential opportunities for connections to and from the wider villages outside the city of Exeter, with the possibility of developing

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.

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new infrastructure links and / or the creation of green lanes (5.7.1), these opportunities are largely outside this long term plan and have not been prioritised. It is disappointing that these links are not given greater prominence within the LCWIP.

The proposed routes recognise the importance of provision for journeys to and from schools, colleges and the university. If the desired long term step change towards walking and cycling is to be achieved, a part of the overall programme budget should build on previous funding initiatives regarding cycle training, taster sessions, support schemes and associated education for young people. This, in turn, will enable greater public access in the long term to open air recreation and enjoyment, benefitting health and well-being and will help achieve other objectives of the Plan. Ways in which the LCWIP is able to evidence results in changed practice within the population of young people across Exeter should be sought.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum has prepared a position statement on planning and this is attached. Many of the statements focus on the need to embed walking and cycling in the design of new developments and encourage people to use sustainable transport. The Forum advises that the Exeter LCWIP should be cross-referenced against this position statement.

The 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...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes county and city 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.