



**Devon Countryside Access Forum**  
**c/o Public Rights of Way Team**  
**Great Moor House**  
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## **Fifty-Seventh meeting** **Devon Countryside Access Forum**

**Virtual meeting. For joining instructions please contact the Forum Officer for further details on attendance and / or public participation**

Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 10.00 am

The meeting will be open to the public in accordance with provisions of reg.7 of The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007 (under s 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of interests
3. To approve minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 (Pages 1 - 12)
4. Matters arising
  - 4.1 Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan
  - 4.2 Advisory note on trails (Pages 13 - 18)

To note final version following discussion at the last meeting.
  - 4.3 Annual Report
5. Correspondence log (Pages 19 - 22)

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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6. Public questions
7. British Horse Society and Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (Pages 23 - 24)

To consider representation made by the BHS seeking that equestrians are included in the provision of safe off-road routes and the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

8. Public Rights of Way update
9. Ludwell Valley Park (Pages 25 - 28)

To consider recommendations to submit to the Devon Wildlife Trust which manages six valley parks in Exeter on behalf of Exeter City Council.

10. Disability Access Position Statement (Pages 29 - 32)

To note and approve revised Disability Access Position Statement following amendment to links and removal of reference to the Field Fare Trust which has ceased to exist.

11. To note and approve responses to consultations

11.1 Marsh Barton Railway Station (Pages 33 - 36)

11.2 Planning for the Future (Pages 37 - 44)

11.3 Review of the Highway Code (Pages 45 - 48)

11.4 Lower Otter Valley planning application (Pages 49 - 52)

11.5 Teign Estuary Trail (Pages 53 - 54)

11.6 Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan (Pages 55 - 60)

12. Current consultations

12.1 Countryside Code update, Natural England (Pages 61 - 72)

12.2 Parks and Green Spaces, Exeter City Council (Pages 73 - 80)

12.3 Devon Interim Carbon Plan (Pages 81 - 90)

To consider a response to the transport questions in the Devon Interim Carbon Plan.

13. Dates of meetings 2021/2022
14. Recruitment and appointments to the Devon Countryside Access Forum
15. Any other business

Notice of questions from the public should be submitted in writing four working days before the Forum meeting. At the discretion of the Chair members of the public may be invited to ask a question or make a statement.





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## Minutes of the Fifty-Sixth meeting of the Devon Countryside Access Forum

Virtual meeting

Thursday, 24 September 2020

### **Attendance**

#### *Forum members*

Andrew Baker  
Joanna Burgess  
Chris Cole (Vice-Chair)  
Tim Felton  
Lucinda Francis  
Gordon Guest  
Jo Hooper  
Councillor Tony Inch

Sue Leith  
Sue Pudduck  
Councillor Philip Sanders  
Tino Savvas  
Lorna Sherriff  
Sarah Slade (Chair)  
Bryan Smith

#### *Devon County Council Officers and others present*

Helen Clayton, Senior Officer, Public Rights of Way, DCC  
Marta Gawron, Public Rights of Way team  
Ros Mills, Public Rights of Way Manager, DCC  
Hilary Winter, Forum Officer, DCC

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and, in particular, new members Jo Burgess, Lucinda Francis, Sue Leith and Lorna Sherriff. Introductions were made.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Dr Charlie Lloyd who had sadly died in August. The Chair paid tribute to his contribution to meetings and his passionate commitment to access and the environment.

The April meeting had been cancelled due to COVID-19.

### **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

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## **3. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020**

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January were approved, proposed by Cllr Sanders and seconded by Andrew Baker.

## **5. Matters arising**

### **5.1 Stover Country Park**

Stover Country Park had been awarded £341,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for improvements to the park after resubmitting an earlier proposal. The two-year development phase grant will support further work and studies to help restore the Park and its environmental and historic setting.

A grant application for the second round of National Lottery Heritage funding will be prepared for the delivery phase of the project, scheduled to take place from 2022-2025. This will include a full fundraising plan, business plan, conservation management plan, and management and maintenance plan. Subject to approval, there will be four new sections of walking routes which will link into the existing Heritage Trail and Poetry Trail and create new circular routes.

Ros Mills, DCC, thanked the Forum for its helpful letter of bid support. Three posts were currently being advertised to progress the project and archaeological and hydrology surveys had been commissioned. The Country Park team were very pleased to be involved in the project.

In response to Gordon Guest, Ros Mills confirmed that accessible toilets and accessibility had been taken into account in the bid and as part of the aspiration to be an exponent of a neutral, sustainable and best practice project.

### **5.2 Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan**

The final plan had been published in early September and was available online.

### **5.3 Fire Beacon Hill**

Members noted the new information posters and use of a GPS tracking system to control cattle. This did not use invisible fencing so would have no potential impact on pacemakers and the plan is to remove current temporary electric fencing.

Some welfare concerns had been expressed generally about electric controls and a law about electric collars on dogs is currently at the proposal stage.

## **5.4 Pebblebed Heaths Visitor Management Plan**

The Forum had held a working group in 2019 and responded to the consultation. The South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee has approved recommendations.

Signage and interpretation boards are in progress and some improvements made to boardwalks and path surfacing. Sufficient developer contributions had been collected to enable phased implementation of visitor access improvements. The South and East Devon Habitat Regulations Delivery Manager is investigating which work would require planning permission and looking at timescales and costs. Works are to be organised to provide significant upgrades prior to any scheduled restriction of access. Four car parks are to be improved during phase 1 in 2020-21 at a cost of up to £161,129. Signage focussing on behaviour and promoted routes had allocated spend of £13,000 in the first year of the five-year business plan and interpretation boards up to £10,000.

Gordon Guest reported that he had been involved in a couple of informal meetings through Disabled Ramblers to discuss earth bunds at car parks. He had been impressed with how responsive Clinton Devon Estates' staff had been in removing these.

The Forum Officer agreed to ascertain the outcome on horse box parking following the consultation.

*Action: Forum Officer*

## **5.5 Mid Devon Local Plan Review – Proposed Main Modifications**

A response had been submitted following the last meeting supporting the main modifications. An additional comment was made, based on previous DCAF advice, stating that the Forum had concerns about the availability of green infrastructure in floodplain areas to provide access all-year round. It advised that it would be helpful for the Local Plan to be modified to reflect this. Appropriate safety measures and information boards may need to be put in place.

It was confirmed the Local Plan had subsequently been adopted.

## **6. Correspondence log**

The correspondence log was noted. The Chair drew attention to the importance of position statements in responding to business between meetings. It was highlighted

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that landowners/land managers can apply to Natural England to close access land for 28 discretionary days each year and these applications were included on the log.

## 7. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Forum Officer took the Chair. In the current COVID-19 circumstances, Sarah Slade and Chris Cole had offered to continue as Chair and Vice Chair until April 2021. They had been acting in this capacity since the April meeting was postponed. No one else had put their names forward. This was very much appreciated in enabling the work of the Forum to continue smoothly. Cllr Sanders proposed Sarah Slade continue as Chair and Chris Cole as Vice Chair, seconded by Tim Felton.

## 8. Public questions

There were no public questions.

## 9. Meetings attended by DCAF members

### Ludwell Valley Park

In accordance with COVID-19 rules, a small working group consisting of Sarah Slade, Chris Cole, Gordon Guest and the Forum Officer, had met with the Reserves Manager and Site Manager from Devon Wildlife Trust. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss accessibility as the number of kissing gates precluded use by disabled users and people with pushchairs.

Ludwell Valley Park is an extensive undulating park which includes woodland and agricultural land, surrounded by housing and Pynes Hill business park. It adjoins a large area of playing fields and is popular with dog walkers and runners. Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) had taken over the management of Ludwell Valley and other Exeter countryside parks on a 30-year lease from Exeter City Council in May 2019.

The working group looked at the park from the Topsham Road end and from Ludwell Lane and witnessed some of the challenges of the site, including grazing cattle and grassland management. Use of the park had increased significantly during lockdown. The DWT was keen to preserve the rural feel and improve biodiversity. As an urban park, it was managed differently to the DWT nature reserves. There are some urban fringe type issues associated with anti-social behaviour.

The working group, in discussions with the Devon Wildlife Trust staff, identified some areas which were potentially more accessible if phased changes could be made to introduce accessible gates. Major improvements to surfacing had not been suggested as these were unnecessary and would reduce the countryside feel of the park. The top of the park and valley bottom presented opportunities. The group recognised the importance of cattle grazing and noted the Devon Wildlife Trust left existing gates open, where possible, when cattle were elsewhere. A friends' type group was active but resources for both improvements and day to day maintenance were limited.

The park presented an opportunity to incorporate cycling too, particularly for family groups, although there were cycling routes on the periphery of the park.

The working group had requested more details from the Devon Wildlife Trust and hoped to go back with recommendations, subject to agreement of the whole Forum. This might assist in formulating grant bids. It was noted that the Trust manage other parks in Exeter and some solutions might be transferable.

*Action: Working group to put proposals to the Forum.*

## **10. Minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee held on 5 March 2020**

Minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee were noted.

## **11. Public Rights of Way update and discussion**

Ros Mills, Public Rights of Way Manager, said staff had been busy during lockdown. Risk assessments had been carried out to allow site work with protocols established for contractors.

The network had proved very popular and there had been a 153% increase in use of the Exe Estuary Trail at the southern end, with much work to ensure social distancing.

Landowners had been permitted to put in temporary unofficial diversions on public rights of way where they felt vulnerable. These had been logged.

The asset and enforcement team had adapted to new ways of working and to an exponential rise in reports from the public. Many more new users were accessing the countryside who were less familiar with public rights of way and the off-road recreational trail network. Occasionally there were tensions when people strayed from paths and expected a parkland type experience – somewhere to play. It was a balance between managing people and their expectations and new challenges such as electric bikes and inexperience of farm animals and wildlife.

There had been some supply chain issues affecting maintenance work, for example quarries were closed, and contingency planning for the next six months was in hand. Expressions of interest were being sought by DCC for the next framework contract (2021-2025) for the maintenance and improvement works to approximately 5,000km of Public Rights of Way (comprising footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways), 230km of off-road recreational trail network (for example, the Tarka Trail) and 590km of minor road network (mainly unmetalled). This included the South West Coast Path National Trail for which DCC is responsible, along with the areas covered by Stover Country Park and the Grand Western Canal Country Park. The historic annual spend for this work has been approximately £1.5m.

Capital budgets for big schemes such as resurfacing and bridges had been secured from central government, but revenue budgets were on the decrease. This would be a challenge in the future.

Helen Clayton, Legal and Development Team, reported a different impact with limited public engagement and face to face meetings. The Definitive Map Review team had been forced to suspend order making due to the statutory requirements for

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advertising. The team is now finding alternative ways of complying. Informal consultations had been suspended to avoid encouraging any unnecessary travel. The record offices had been shut, limiting historic research, and the Public Rights of Way Committee due to take place in July had been cancelled. The November PROW Committee would take place virtually.

P3 activities had been constrained but now volunteers were gradually undertaking work with COVID-19 measures in place.

More people were interested in claiming historic routes and enquiries had increased. Publicity about 2026 during lockdown had encouraged interest. A summary had been added to the Public Rights of Way website

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/definitive-map-2026-cut-off-date-for-historic-paths/>

It is likely that Planning Inquiries will be virtual, with the first one planned in late September. These will be lengthier due to limits on screen time.

Activities were being carried out in a different way. The team is looking at Microsoft SWAY, a presentation application, to present information to the public in conjunction with virtual meetings with parish councils.

A question was asked about the impact of shared access and any research into people's perceptions and social media complaints. Ros Mills responded that there was data about numbers from key counters and social media feedback for popular routes. The Country parks had been very busy, despite the lack of facilities, as visitor centres and toilets were directed to be closed. The parks are still very busy, and facilities are opening (suitably risk assessed).

It was noted that mountain bikes using footpaths illegally and the increase in electric bikes on trails could heighten safety issues. Educating users and appropriate campaigns could take place but were complex and costly. The value of using outdoor space was increasingly recognised.

It was noted the University of Exeter had undertaken statistical analysis quantifying the benefits of green space which could be a useful starting point.

It was mentioned that people had been encouraged out during lockdown but lack of toilets and other facilities, which varied by district and town, had exacerbated some issues. This needed further thought in terms of public rights of way and trails. It was confirmed that toilets at Stover and the Grand Western Canal, under the auspices of DCC, had opened as soon as safe to do so. It was suggested the Forum might develop a position statement on toilet provision.

Some signs had been developed during the lockdown period by different organisations and a plea was put forward for continuity to ensure the same message was conveyed. Ros Mills, DCC, said that a downloadable sign had been available (from the Welsh Assembly and Natural England) and had police support and NFU support in Devon. PROW had tried to assist landowners, especially as lockdown was at its height at lambing time. Helen Clayton, DCC, confirmed there was no national sign. Guidance on keeping the message simple with links and qr codes had been promoted together with awareness of social distancing and dog control. Links

to national websites were used as too much information on posters could become outdated. The Countryside Code had been updated and some national organisations felt additional promotion would be helpful.

Coronavirus presented a huge number of issues. New users on the ground were a good thing in terms of mental and physical health benefits and the value of green space was more appreciated. At a local/national level it was important to consider recommendations to ensure the countryside was used responsibly. It was agreed that national initiatives, such as public information films or announcements in an accessible format, would be useful. The Aardman films had connected with people.

The Chair suggested that the Forum should consider how to take things forward and she would speak to Ros Mills and Helen Clayton in the first instance.

*Action: DCAF Chair to speak to Public Rights of Way staff.*

**12. Break - ten minutes**

**13. Advisory note on trails**

It was suggested that a new sentence should be incorporated to bring the document up to date by mentioning that usage has increased significantly since the advent of coronavirus through additional use of the trail for recreation, exercise and commuting. The word 'conflict' later in the document should be qualified by adding "in this context." These changes were agreed.

*Action: Forum Officer to amend advisory note and circulate.*

**14. Annual Report 2019-2020**

Members approved the annual report. It was agreed photographs should state the location. Some additional photographs would be inserted.

The Forum Officer was complimented on the monthly newsletter which was circulated to members and a range of individuals and organisations as well as being available online.

*Action: Forum Officer*

**15. To note and approve responses to consultations and any feedback**

**15.1 Network Rail. Public consultation on revised plans to protect the vital rail line between Teignmouth and Dawlish.**

The response was noted and approved.

**15.2 England Coast Path**

The response was noted and approved.

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The eight-week objection/representation period ended in March and a number of objections and representations had been received for both stretches. Natural England had written up its reports and sent these to Defra. The next steps are to await Secretary of State approval for the reports where there have been no objections and wait for the Planning Inspectorate to confirm when an inspector will be visiting objection sites. Once there is Secretary of State approval the access authority (Devon County Council) can apply for England Rural Development Programme grants to install the necessary infrastructure.

Gordon Guest said the Disabled Ramblers had put in an extensive report with photographs and meetings were taking place with the South West Coast Path team, arranged through Tino Savvas, to discuss some possible works to improve accessibility.

The Chair confirmed that the timescale was not known, even without the coronavirus complications. The Planning Inspectorate had a backlog of work.

## **15.3 North Devon Pioneer Environmental Land Management Scheme**

The response was noted and approved.

The Forum Officer had attended a virtual meeting. A number of the DCAF suggestions had been included and maps of access now distinguish between bridleways and footpaths. The priority outcomes incorporate many advisory clauses from the DCAF position statements.

The Chair confirmed work was progressing and that she had taken part in an early stage pilot scheme.

## **15.4 Tiverton EUE (Area B) Public Consultation**

The response was noted and approved.

## **15.5 Public Spaces Protection Orders (dogs)**

The responses to Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams and West Devon councils were noted and approved.

The Chair commented on the complexity of submitting the responses in different formats but the plea for consistency had been put across.

## **15.6 Marsh Barton Railway Station**

The responses were noted and approved. The application would be determined by the Development Management Committee and Cllr Sanders declared an interest as a member of that committee.

## 15.7 England Tree Strategy

The response was noted and approved. Members agreed with the decision to send a table reflecting the full range of member opinion as there had been no clear steer in the priorities identified by individual members.

## 16. Current consultations

### 16.1 Planning for the Future

The consultation sought views on a package of proposals to reform the planning system in England: to streamline and modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land is available for development. The closing date was the end of October.

Individual members were advised to respond if they had strong views.

Options presented to the Forum by the Chair were to focus on particular questions, either by setting up a working group or using position statements. A paper had not been included with the agenda.

Several members supported a working group as the proposals, if implemented, would be a fundamental change to the existing planning system. It was noted that the public rights of way network could be compromised close to urban areas where development might take place. The document did not appear to include much on access to the countryside. A large number of developments were taking place in Devon, such as Cullompton Garden Village, with pressure on public rights of way.

The importance of continued local input through Neighbourhood Plans and Local Plans was noted. Cllr Inch confirmed that councillors were asked for views on every planning application.

After discussion, it was agreed to form a working group to look at the proposals and implications for matters within the Forum's remit. Jo Burgess, retired member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, offered to explore some of the issues. Sarah Slade, Tim Felton, Gordon Guest and Sue Leith expressed interest in participating in the group too.

*Action: Forum Officer to arrange virtual working group meeting.*

### 16.2 Review of the Highway Code

A discussion took place on a small number of proposals within the Highway Code review within the DCAF's remit.

It was noted that the average driver does not read the Highway Code. For

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the review to be effective the public needed to read the Code periodically or the contents should be publicised, possibly using public service broadcasts, as in Germany, or on YouTube.

It was thought the matter of mobility scooters being unable to use cycle lanes had not been addressed in the review and the Forum Officer undertook to look into this.

*Action: Forum Officer.*

The Highway Code review proposed a hierarchy of users according to vulnerability. It was agreed this was a useful addition, subject to clarity about where each user group fell in the hierarchy and a visual depiction. People with learning disabilities had not been included as a group and they might react differently to expected. It was agreed dog walkers should be included and reference made to electric scooters and bikes. Faster moving modes of transport were more dangerous. It was noted that in many countries on the continent the car driver would be at fault in a collision with a more vulnerable user.

New rule 63 (rules for cyclists) was approved but clarification would be sought on what classifies as high speed as that was open to interpretation. Additional points that would be raised were the opportunity to use a 'share with care' message and that people with learning difficulties had not been mentioned.

Members considered changes to rule 163 - using the road. It was noted the Highway Code was not a legal document but incorporated road traffic legislation. It was agreed that the proposed passing distances at different speeds for different user groups were not clear. The distance should be consistent with a strong message to take care. References to high speed or low speed were ambiguous.

Members had mixed views on whether cycle bells should be compulsory. Advance audible warning was helpful but over-reliance on bells could give cyclists and more vulnerable users a false sense of security.

On narrow lanes and approaching narrow bridges, for example, it was agreed that cyclists might have to dismount. Equally car drivers in this situation might have to stop to allow users to pass, as well as holding back before overtaking. No mention had been made of farm animals which might be encountered on rural roads.

It was agreed the fundamental message should be about education: people who walk or use modes of transport should do so with consideration for other people at all times and think about their actions and the impact on others. Consideration and respect should be the key messages.

An amendment to rule 63 proposed that cyclists may pass slower moving or stationary traffic on their left or right, including at the approach to junctions. A discussion took place. Whilst some members thought this could improve

safety for cyclists who might not wish to pass on the right, others thought traffic may not remain stationary and drivers might not be able to see cyclists in their mirrors.

It was agreed that whilst primary schools might instil the highway code as part of cycling instruction, it was important for it to be embedded at secondary school level.

## 17. Any other business

### Teign Estuary Cycle Trail – Value Management Workshop

The Forum had been invited to send a representative to a virtual meeting in October. Bryan Smith expressed interest but declared an interest as a resident of the area.

*Action: Forum Officer to forward details*

### Dartmoor National Park

Gordon Guest had been working with Tim Russell at Dartmoor National Park Authority to look at improvements to wheelchair accessible routes. Work had taken place at Haytor, Haytor Quarry, Princetown and Bellever Forest and was ongoing.

### Youth engagement

Bryan Smith suggested that it would be useful to contact the Youth Parliament for Devon to see whether they might engage or be interested in the workings of the Forum.

### Torrige District Council Active Travel Group

Cllr Inch reported that he was on the district council Active Travel Development Group which was investigating cycle routes and footpaths that could be developed around Bideford and Torrington. It was interested in the former Kenwith railway line between Bideford and Westward Ho! and discussions were taking place with landowners.

### Public Rights of Way offices

The Public Rights of Way team had moved to offices in Great Moor House, Sowton, and was now in the same building as Devon Archives and Local Studies (previously the County Record Office).

## 18. Date of next meeting

Unless circumstances changed, the next meeting on 21 January would be held virtually.

DRAFT



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## **Devon Countryside Access Forum**

### **Statement and Recommendations**

#### **Trail Safety**

#### **Introduction**

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 the County Council.

The DCAF currently has fifteen 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.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is providing the following advice on trail safety following discussions at its meetings, site visits and participation by the Chair in a joint meeting with the Exe Estuary Management Partnership and Devon County Council.

The Forum is committed to the principle of multi-use and accessible trails which enable a wide range of users to access the countryside. By multi-use the Forum means accessible to all users: walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and those with mobility scooters or prams. Multi-use offers sustainable transport options, particularly where safe off-road routes are available, and contributes to individual and community health and well-being and to the environment.

#### **What are some of the issues?**

1. There is a perception that conflict on trails may be increasing and in particular on the Exe Estuary Trail where there has been a significant rise in the number of users. A few complaints have been received by Devon County Council. Conflict in this context is defined as a situation which usually arises when the behaviour of one user interferes with the safety or perceived safety of the other user.

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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Conflict can arise within user-type (for example, cyclists or dog walkers) or between different user types (for example, between a dog-walker and cyclist or between a walker and horse-rider).

Usage has further increased significantly since the advent of Coronavirus through additional use of trails for recreation, exercise and commuting.

2. Some trails, for example the Exe Estuary Trail and parts of the Tarka Trail and Drake's Trail are used by both recreational and functional cyclists. Commuting cyclists often prefer a harder, sealed surface and the capacity to cycle at speed. Downhill stretches, harder surfaces and use of Apps, such as Strava, which promotes 'personal best' routes, can encourage cyclists to go faster.

Any improvements can also result in increased usage.

3. The use of electric bikes and improved mobility vehicles means that additional numbers using powered assistance are accessing the trails. These may include other novel electric-assisted vehicles. These are currently designed to assist riders up to 15.5 mph. Although not currently legal, there may be changes to permit use by electric scooters which can travel at a higher speed.
4. Financing for trails often means that a sealed surface is provided to reduce long-term maintenance costs.
5. Existing infrastructure sometimes means that it is not possible to achieve a consistent standard for a route in its entirety.

## Recommended pilot schemes and initiatives

### Signs

- a) The use of National Cycle Network signs implies that a route is primarily for cyclists. These signs could be supplemented with additional information.
- b) 'Share this space' messages are useful and are supported by the DCAF. However, consideration needs to be given to managing people on the route and slowing people down, where needed.
- c) Other messages could provide a stronger impact for example 'share with care', 'respect other users', 'give space' and 'pass with care'.
- d) Where possible, signs should be pictorial as well to aid understanding. People may not read well or understand English.
- e) Appropriate photographic signs, as being piloted on the Grand Western Canal, could be used where there are specific issues with visibility and to alert people to

other users on the route. These might be applicable at the entrances to tunnels, dimly lit to protect bats, or on sharp bends.

- f) 3D imagery or signs on the ground could have an impact where there are perceived areas of conflict or at entry points to a route. This might be where a trail narrows or along sections where there are greater numbers of users.
- g) Ideally, signs should be varied from time to time to avoid becoming part of the scenery. Equally, too many signs can be intrusive in the landscape, particularly on more rural routes and careful consideration needs to be given to placing these at locations with the greatest impact. Subliminal images such as a smiling face could be effective.

## Engineering solutions

- h) Consideration should be given to providing sections that do not have sealed surfaces to allow for a slower route and a more enjoyable recreational experience. This could be achieved by offering parallel routes with different surfaces.
- i) Road commuting should be improved to ensure commuting cyclists have a safer road space.
- j) Rumble strips and other calming measures should be trialled at identified conflict points with an opportunity to feedback on different options. This would provide a learning experience and evidence base.

## Partnership approaches

- k) Collaboration with local businesses and sponsorship for signing would be useful to explore.
- l) Some trails include on-road sections. It might be possible to use a Quiet Lanes approach, as permitted under the Transport Act 2000, in consultation with parishes and other stakeholders to educate car users that other recreational users may be using the road. This 'share with care' or 'expect and respect' approach, as used in Gloucestershire and Suffolk, might allow soft landscaping, changes to roads and verges, different surface treatments and the provision of passing bays. Monitoring of usage and behaviour change should be included as part of any trial.
- m) Sustrans' volunteers are out on the trails and engage with users. Liaising with Sustrans might help in getting messages across to trail users.
- n) Friends' groups can sometimes attract funding from charities and other sources not available to councils. It is recommended that a community enabler might explore the capacity to establish Friends' groups for some of the more popular trails. As well as a fundraising role, such groups could raise awareness of local issues.

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## Publicity and education

- o) Rangers/on site educational and trail management support would be advantageous to encourage responsible trail use. An accompanying awareness campaign could be funded where there are particular issues.
- p) Marketing and social media campaigns around soft messaging could assist alongside upfront website information.

## Additional aspects

- q) The provision of car parking, refreshments and toilet facilities are additional aspects which should be considered alongside the trail itself. These may be essential for some users to be able to access or enjoy the trail. The 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act recognised the importance of refreshments on national trails. Similarly, long local trails would benefit from the provision of facilities to encourage users and potentially provide business opportunities.
- r) Solutions need to be sustainable to reduce the financial liability.

*Appendix 1, below, provides examples of signs.*

APPENDIX 1

Solutions - signs



Devon County Council



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Signs from the Peak District National Park



Grand Western Canal



Norfolk County Council



Suffolk County Council – start and end of Quiet Lane

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## Solutions – surface signs



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**Devon Countryside Access Forum  
CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED  
(not specifically on agenda)  
Available to view on request**

	<b>Sender</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Action and any feedback</b>
1	Member of public 30.08.20	Email about blocked path.	Forwarded to public rights of way warden for action.
2	Forestry Consultation Soil Association 15.09.20	Forest Management carried out by Forestry England SA-FM/COC-006972.  Comments sought on forestry management carried out and/or the standard being used. This is in relation to the requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (2018) for timber, venison and Christmas trees.	Outside remit.
3	East Devon District Council 29.09.20	Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan – acknowledgement of response.	No action required.
4	Teignbridge District Council 5.10.20	Teignbridge District Council Validation Guide Consultation.	Outside remit.
5	East Devon District Council 7.10.20	Newton Poppleford and Harpford Neighbourhood Plan.  The independent examination of the above Neighbourhood Plan is now complete. The <a href="#">Examiner's Report</a> is now published on the website.  (In accordance with the relevant legislation, the District Council (Cabinet) on 8 October agreed to the recommendations and to publish the decision notice which would give the Plan 'significant weight' in the determination of planning applications in the Newton Poppleford & Harpford parish area.	For information and to note that the Decision Statement will give the Plan 'significant' weight in determining planning applications, even if the referendum is delayed until after May 2021.

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		<p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the referendum would be delayed until after May 2021).</p> <p>A Decision Statement is published on the <a href="#">Neighbourhood Planning webpages</a></p>	
6	<p>Open Access Centre 8.10.20</p>	<p>Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the following dates in 2020:</p> <p>3 November 2020</p> <p>24 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used.</p>	<p>For information. No action required.</p>
7	<p>Marine Management Organisation 15.10.20</p>	<p>Marine Management Organisation (MMO) annual survey covering different aspects of how the Draft South West Marine Plan is used and in particular changes to procedures and/or activities.</p>	<p>Peripheral to remit and the Draft South West Marine Plan has not been used in the course of the DCAF's work during 2020.</p>
8	<p>Colyton Parish Council 21.10.20</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Colyton Parish Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation.</p>	<p>Consulted with Chair and sent Neighbourhood Plan position statement.</p>
9	<p>East Devon District Council 27.10.20</p>	<p>Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan. Examination of the plan to commence shortly.</p>	<p>For information.</p>
10	<p>Ringmore Parish Council 4.11.20</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 Pre-Submission consultation</p>	<p>Consulted with Chair and sent Neighbourhood Plan Position Statement. Advised that a map of Public Rights of Way would be a useful addition to accompany a map of viewpoints in the parish.</p>

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11	South Hams and West Devon Joint Local Plan update newsletter 11.11.20	<p>Work on the Local Green Space Development Plan Document has been paused due to COVID-19 and the impact on the Council's budget. This will give an opportunity to consider the future of the document in the context of recently announced planning reforms.</p> <p>No decision has been made regarding when work may resume but everyone who has engaged in the process to date will be notified.</p>	For information.
12	Exeter City Council 17.11.20	<p>Exeter Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – Call for Sites</p> <p>The development potential of sites put forward during the Call will be assessed by Exeter City Council planning officers and a panel of representatives from the housing and economic development industries. The conclusions will be published in a 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment' (HELAA).</p> <p>The results of the HELAA will inform the sites chosen as possible development sites in a new Local Plan for Exeter.</p>	Outside remit.
13	Open Access Centre 3.12.20	<p>Case number 2020099277</p> <p>Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p> <p>The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the additional date of 12 January 2021.</p> <p>6 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used.</p>	For information.

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14	Open Access Centre 3.12.20	Case number 2019088949  Notification of a discretionary restriction under Section 22 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.  The restriction applies to land at Hartridge Hense Moor and Luppitt Common for the additional date of 15 December 2020.  25 of the 28 days allocated to this case have now been used.	
15	Broadclyst Parish Council 15.12.20	Reg 14 consultation on the Draft of the Broadclyst Parish Neighbourhood Plan.	Discussed with Chair and sent Neighbourhood Plan position statement and Disability Access position statement. In addition, highlighted comments on quiet lanes and permissive paths, as in the response to the Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan, and need to consult with landowners / managers at an early stage.
16	South Hams and West Devon 16.12.20	Housing Strategy 2021-2026. <i>Better Homes, Better Lives.</i> Consultation covering South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council.	Peripheral to remit.
17	Kilmington Parish Council 18.12.20	Kilmington Village Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation.	Discussed with Chair and sent Neighbourhood Plan position statement and the Disability Access position statement. Also suggested that the map of public rights of way including the National Cycle Network 2 route.

*In addition, the DCAF Forum Officer receives a large quantity of e-mail updates from Devon County Council and other organisations. Relevant information is extracted and circulated to DCAF members via regular newsletters or forwarded direct.*

## Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

**From:** BHS  
**Sent:** 05 November 2020 09:18  
**To:** Undisclosed recipients  
**Subject:** Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Dear Sir/Madam,

### Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

With the issuing of the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in 2017 and the implementation of Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, the British Horse Society is keen that the implementation of these plans are not inadvertently detrimental to equestrians, and that provision is made for equestrians to be included on any safe off road routes that are to be provided.

The Society has received some disturbing reports of routes being provided on highway verges/margins for cyclists and walkers, with horse riders being excluded resulting in them being left as the proverbial 'meat in the sandwich' with cyclists whizzing past on their inside and cars and lorries thundering past on their outside, a recipe for disaster and something that will only increase the horrifying horse accident statistics.

Since 2010, the British Horse Society has had over 4,774 road incidents involving horses reported to it, 1080 horses have been injured, 395 horses have died, 44 humans have lost their lives and 1220 have been injured. The Society estimates that only 10% of such incidents are currently reported to it. The 2019/2020 hospital episodes statistics show that there were 3,331 admissions resulting from 'an animal rider or occupant of an animal drawn vehicle being injured in a transport accident.'

Ministers have consistently stressed that equestrians should be included in such strategies and plans.

2018: Jesse Norman MP, Parliamentary Under –Secretary of State for Transport in House of Commons debate on Road Safety, 5 November 2018: "We should be clear that the cycling and walking strategy may have that name but is absolutely targeted at vulnerable road users, including horse-riders...Horse riders are vulnerable road users—there is no doubt about that, and there never has been—and they have been included in the work we are doing."

2019 Transport Minister Michael Ellis MP (June 20th, 2019): "In November, the Government published its response to the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS): safety review call for evidence. The response sets out a vision and a two-year plan containing 50 actions to tackle cycling, walking and horse-riding safety."

The British Horse Society therefore advocates that the provision of all off road routes for whatever purpose, be it social, economic or environmental should include all non-motorised users. The Society will seek to ensure that all off road provision for non-motorised users in Local plans and spatial development strategies, transport plans, waste plans, minerals plans, National Park plans and rights of way improvement plans includes equestrians.

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Please do not hesitate to contact the Society; the Society would welcome the opportunity to discuss the inclusion of equestrians in your Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Yours faithfully,

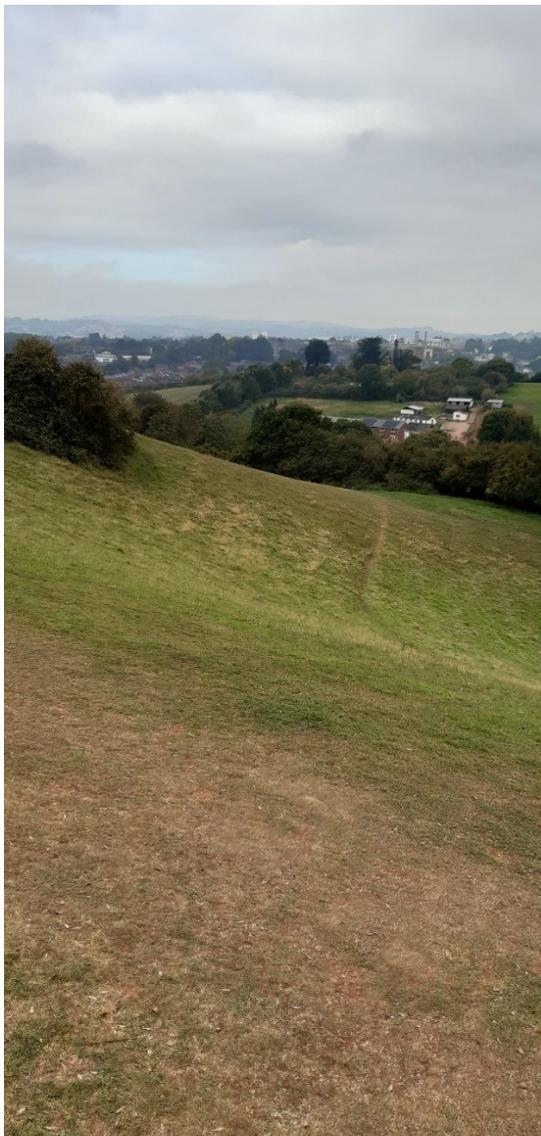
Mark Weston,  
Director of Access

## LUDWELL VALLEY PARK

### Summary

As reported at the last meeting, a small working group consisting of Sarah Slade, Chris Cole, Gordon Guest and the Forum Officer, had met with the Reserves Manager and Site Manager from Devon Wildlife Trust. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss accessibility as the number of kissing gates preclude use by disabled users and people with pushchairs. This meeting took place in September under COVID-19 rules in place at the time.

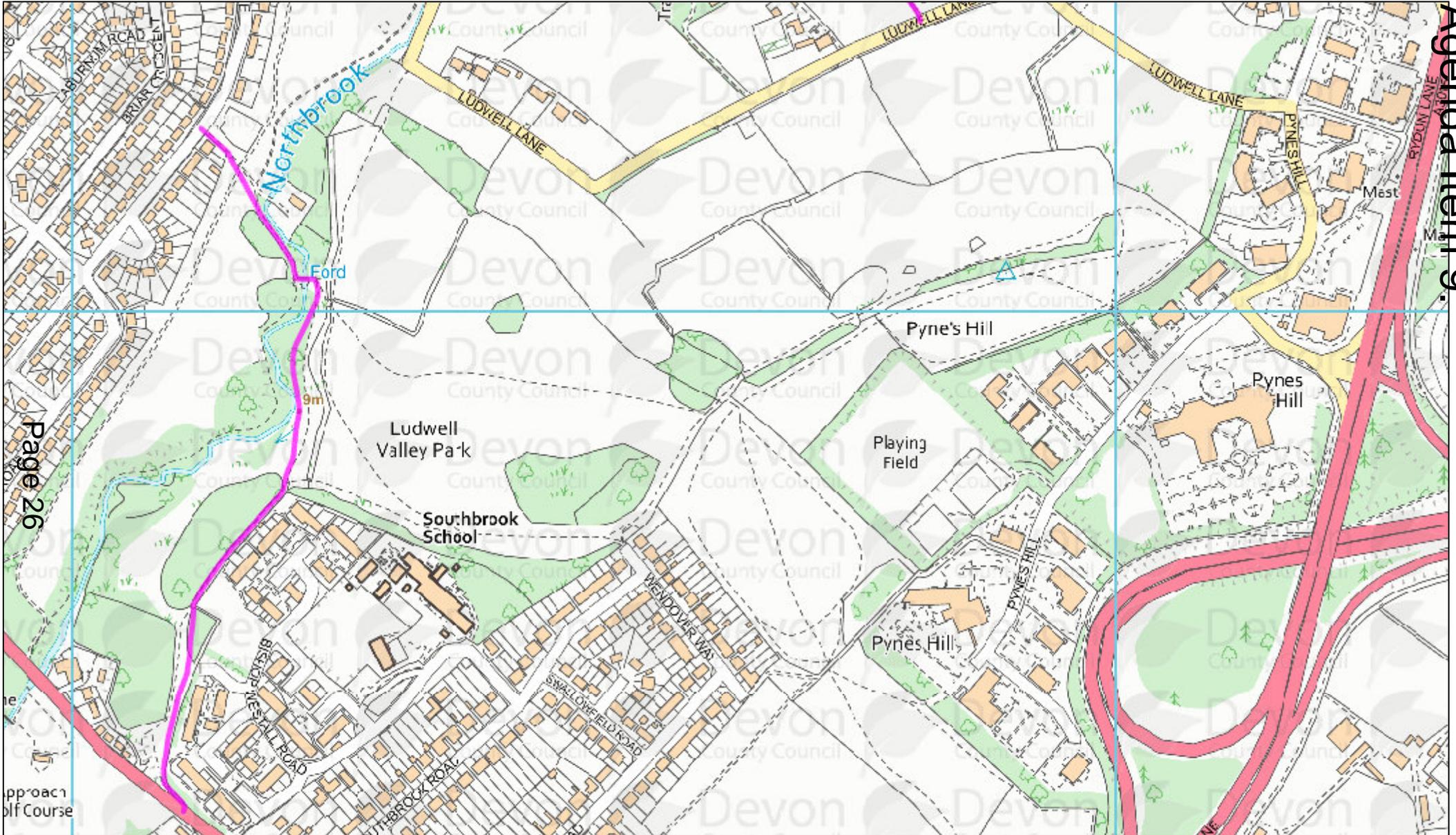
Ludwell Valley Park is an extensive undulating park, 58ha in total, which includes woodland and agricultural land and is surrounded by housing and Pynes Hill business park. It adjoins a large area of playing fields and is particularly popular with dog walkers and runners. Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) took over the management of Ludwell Valley and other Exeter countryside parks on a 30-year lease from Exeter City Council in May 2019, an area of around 140ha.



*Looking east to the City from the ridge*



*Looking north from the ridge*



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As well as kissing gates on the periphery of the park, there are a significant number of kissing gates within the park plus field gates, footbridges and boardwalk bridges. Some of the field gates are associated with agricultural management of part of the land.



*Different entrances and types of path furniture in the park.  
Photos top and bottom right by Gordon Guest.*

The working group looked at the park from the Topsham Road end and from Ludwell Lane and witnessed some of the challenges of the site, including grazing cattle and grassland management. Use of the park has increased significantly during lockdown periods in 2020/21 and higher numbers may well be sustained as people realise what is on their doorstep.

The DWT is keen to preserve the rural feel and improve biodiversity. As an urban park, it is managed differently to the DWT nature reserves. There are some urban fringe type issues associated with anti-social behaviour.

The working group, in discussions with the Devon Wildlife Trust staff, identified some areas which were potentially more accessible if phased changes could be made to

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introduce accessible gates. Major improvements to surfacing had not been suggested as these were unnecessary and would reduce the countryside feel of the park. The top of the park and valley bottom presented particular opportunities where access could be improved. The group recognised the importance of cattle grazing and noted the Devon Wildlife Trust left existing gates open, where possible, when cattle were elsewhere.

The park presented an opportunity to incorporate cycling too, particularly for family groups, although there are cycling routes on the periphery of the park.

The working group offered to make specific recommendations following the next full Forum meeting.

## **Action**

At the September 2020 meeting, the Devon Countryside Access Forum agreed to identify improvements and make some recommendations to the Devon Wildlife Trust and Exeter City Council. Within that context it is suggested that the Forum bears in mind the following comments.

The current Exeter City Council Parks and Green Space consultation identified some of the challenges in maintaining green space in the city, not least the “problems of financial pressures, especially on revenue (maintenance) budgets, increasing costs, and a legacy of previous reductions in maintenance over the past ten years to meet financial constraints. This leaves limited options to safely maintain the land and assets the council holds.” One of the themes in the accompanying ten year strategy document is “providing the evidence base to support future policy and practice to ensure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts are appropriately allocated to support the development of parks and green space in a comprehensive and inclusive way across the city.”



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## **Devon Countryside Access Forum**

### **Physical Disability Access Position Statement**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum recognises that everyone, whether residents or visitors, should be able to enjoy recreation in Devon's natural environment.

#### **The issue**

This Position Statement sets out recommendations for improving access to the countryside for people with limited mobility, including on Public Rights of Way and cycle/multi-use trails, and points readers to more detailed information.

Although this Statement focuses particularly on physical disabilities, it is worth noting that limited mobility affects a range of people, including parents with children in buggies; elderly or frail people, who might use an electric mobility scooter or wheelchair; and people with walking aids. Improving access for wheelchairs and large off-road electric mobility scooters can improve access for all.

Research shows that people with limited mobility are less likely to say they can access 'green spaces' and are less likely to visit the countryside. This is because they experience barriers that can be impossible to navigate. Barriers can include:

- stiles;
- steps;
- narrow gates, entrances, paths and exits;
- difficult or high handles and latches on gates;
- logs or earth mounds;
- steep gradients and cross-gradients; and
- overgrown vegetation.

The DCAF recognises that there are some routes that cannot be made accessible because of flights of steps or unavoidably narrow sections. However, many barriers can be removed at relatively low cost, opening up significant areas of countryside to more disabled people. The aim should be to achieve the least restrictive option.

Disabled people are now benefiting from ongoing technological improvements in mobility aids. Now, electric and all terrain scooters/buggies, such as the off-road Tramper, can

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cope with more challenging gradients (25%) and cross gradients as well as having good ground clearance. All-terrain type scooters are quite capable of going across grass fields and open moorland. Such off-road scooters can even manage distances of 20 to 40 miles. A modest improvement to a gate may open up more extensive areas for access.

Access managers often under-estimate the capability of this new generation of off-road mobility scooters and may think access cannot be improved if routes are not suitable for wheelchairs, whereas it is highly likely that a Trampler off road scooter could cope adequately.

## **Making improvements**

Major modifications to routes using very specific criteria are often inappropriate, especially in rural areas, or very expensive but relatively minor changes can often result in a much more accessible and enjoyable route, particularly for people with all-terrain scooters.

Improvements must be agreed with landowners and should consider how disabled people might be able to access the route while maintaining necessary measures to control farm animals and any vehicles. In some instances, changes will not be possible. Historic or locally important structures should be respected.

Some possible improvements include:

- Replacing stiles and kissing gates with 1.5 m wide gates with good latches and trombone handles. Where self-closing gates are required a two-way gate is preferable. Kissing gates that can be operated by radar keys may be an option in some locations. (e.g. National Trust Parke estate and Fremington Quay nature reserve). Latches are often over-looked but can ensure gates can be easily opened and closed. They should be positioned where they can be reached and in good condition. Long handles which can be reached at different heights are useful to open gates.
- Ensuring the path width and surface are suitable for wheelchairs, buggies and trampers helps many people. This does not mean that a route requires a road surface – minimising puddles, roots and ruts may be all that is needed. Many disabled people still want a countryside experience.
- Ramps rather than steps on approaches to bridges would greatly assist those with disabilities. Where steps are unavoidable, rest or landing areas should be included or there should be signposting to an alternative reasonable route.
- DCAF advises site managers to explore options for facilitating access for Trampler all terrain mobility scooters or making these available for hire, as has been successfully developed by Countryside Mobility South West.
- Routes for cyclists should take into account reclining bikes, trikes and modified bikes as well as Trampler type mobility scooters. These can be longer, lower or wider than a standard bike when navigating a gate or turning space.

## **Planning for better access**

The Forum advises that improvements to Public Rights of Way should incorporate the highest possible access standards from the outset, and that managers should regularly

consider potential enhancements. For example, Parish Councils may be planning improvements to Public Rights of Way through Neighbourhood Plans and should consult disabled people on changes. This will ensure costly mistakes that inhibit access are avoided and that people are informed where it is not possible to make an adjustment and improvement. In planning or designing *new* routes the above recommendations should be considered from the beginning to achieve the highest standards possible. Several organisations have good practice guides to ensure disability access standards can be implemented.

It is also worth noting that improving access to the countryside isn't necessarily limited to improving paths and gateways. People with limited mobility may have other needs too. There are additional aspects to consider and these include:

- Connectivity (access to the site via accessible public transport, disabled parking bays or safe paths).
- Rest (stopping off points such as picnic tables, pubs, cafes and wheelchair (or mobility scooter) accessible toilets).
- Information (providing clear, easy to read information about the route or site so that people can plan their visit with confidence and consider making information usable by visually sighted and/or deaf persons)
- Sensory enhancements such as scented plants for visually impaired people. Also, suitable lighting and clear edges to paths in urban areas.

## Legislation

Under the Equality Act 2010, Public Authorities (including County, District, Town and Parish Councils) have a pro-active legal duty to advance equality for disabled people. This includes meeting disabled people's needs. The Act also places a requirement on providers of services to the public to ensure people are not unlawfully discriminated against and that reasonable adjustments are anticipated and made for disabled people. Landowners who have public access or public rights of way across their land are not providers of public services, and therefore cannot be obliged under the Act to make reasonable adjustments, for example by changing a stile to a gate. Landowners who provide permissive access must comply with the Equality Act by considering what reasonable adjustments can be made for disabled people. However, this does not oblige them to put in place anything that would be an unreasonable cost, ineffective or impractical. More information:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/equality/policy-and-legislation/equality-legislation>

The Department of Transport legislation states that Class 3 mobility scooters must have a maximum speed of 4 mph on pavements and 8 mph on roads, a width of 85 cm and an unladen weight of 150 kg. This class includes Tramper mobility scooters and the TGA 3 wheel Supersport.

<https://www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules/rules-for-class-3-invalid-carriages>

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## Best Practice

For photos showing good practice and details of wheelchair and mobility scooter specifications see the DCAF website [www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf)

For more comprehensive information on standards, particularly when establishing a new route, see:

- Disabled Ramblers UK  
<http://disabledramblers.co.uk/>  
The Disabled Ramblers helps mobility-challenged people get back out into the countryside. Disabled ramblers have several categories of footpath from level 1 for manual wheelchairs to level 3 for off road scooters. Full details are on the website. One useful guide is their publication on Man-made Barriers and Least Restrictive Access  
<http://disabledramblers.co.uk/access-issues/>
- Natural England's Trial of self-closing bridlegates  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4580441024102400>  
The summary and conclusions make recommendations for disability access following a trial involving walkers, horse-riders, cyclists, disabled users and landowners.
- Sensory Trust information fact sheets  
<https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information/index.html>  
These include advice on access design, accessible green space, access to the countryside, seating and shelter and access to historic landscapes.

For more general information on current initiatives in Devon which benefit disability access see:

- Countryside Mobility SW (tramper buggy hire project)  
<http://www.countrysidemobility.org/>
- Living Options Devon Heritage Ability project  
[www.heritageability.org](http://www.heritageability.org)

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a statutory local access forum set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Its members are volunteers, appointed by Devon County Council, to provide independent advice on "the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment". The members represent the interests of landowners/land managers, access users and other interests such as tourism and conservation.



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Ms E Harper  
Planning, Transportation and Environment  
Devon County Council  
County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

16 November 2020

Dear Ms Harper

## **DCC/4187/2020 – Marsh Barton Station planning application**

Thank you for advising the Devon Countryside Access Forum of revisions to drawings associated with this planning application. The Forum would like to make the following comments.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes that there are still a couple of bollards on the walking/cycling bridge, set 20m onto the bridge from each end. While recognising the necessity of ensuring vehicles do not attempt to use the bridge, these could present a danger to cyclists and the Forum advises that they should be removed.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes design changes to improve safety at either end of the new shared-use bridge and welcomes the separation of more vulnerable users from cars. However, the Forum questions whether there will be “no increase in vehicle movement” and suspects it will undoubtedly increase with cars accessing the Bromhams car park, seeking to drop off train passengers and going down to the Double Locks pub. Recreational access use has also increased during COVID-19 with cyclists, dog walkers and walkers using the Exe Estuary Trail, public rights of way and riverside green space nearby. Where Clapperbrook Lane meets the new bridge at either end presents safety concerns for both station users and

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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recreational access users and it is critical that these junctions are unequivocally clear in giving priority to vulnerable users. This will require monitoring and review and, where necessary, design adaptation to ensure safety of all users.

Clapperbrook Lane is narrow, with a humped back bridge at an angle. The planning statement refers to “formalisation of existing passing places”. It appears from the drawings that such passing places have not been included. The Forum strongly advises that these are incorporated to reduce the possibility of cars reversing down Clapperbrook Lane and impacting on the safety of people exiting the new bridge.

The Forum recommends that the Development Management Committee should undertake a site visit in connection with this application.

Feedback on these comments would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Response 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 Devon County Council.

The DCAF currently has fifteen 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.

Email sent 9.10.20 to Planning, Devon County Council

Dear Ms Harper

## **DCC/4187/2020 - Marsh Barton Station**

Thank you for your email advising the Devon Countryside Access Forum that amendments have been made to some of the drawings submitted in connection with the Marsh Barton Station planning application, following concerns raised about road safety.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes revisions to the planning application and the additional detail on signage and road markings. A drop-off point on the Marsh Barton side of Clapperbrook Lane is supported as this will ensure some traffic does not cross the narrow bridge.

Alongside the 'cyclists dismount' sign, it would be helpful to have a visual interpretation of this message for anyone with language difficulties, for example:



The Forum's main concern is the assumption that "it is not envisaged there will be a significant increase in vehicular traffic over the existing situation." The Forum does question this as the road is already very busy and leads to the Double Locks pub and, what is now, short-term parking for the Exe Estuary Trail at Bromhams Playing Field. It advises that priority should be given to the sentence in the planning statement that the "existing passing places will be formalised with traffic signs and road markings, to provide sufficient intervisibility between opposing road users." The number of cars using Clapperbrook Lane should be kept under review and mitigating measures taken, as appropriate, to minimise the impact on more vulnerable road users approaching the new station bridge or continuing onwards.

The Forum would be pleased to receive feedback.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Winter

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Privacy Notice: <http://devon.cc/prow-privacy>





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Planning for the Future Consultation  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
3rd Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

29 October 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Planning for the Future White Paper Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**

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...” It has a statutory function to give advice to specified bodies, including the Secretary of State for any Government department.

The DCAF currently has fifteen 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.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) welcomes this White Paper and has focussed on a few questions which fall more closely within its remit. The detail and clarity on some of the proposals is critical and the DCAF trusts that further consultation will take place.

This response will be on the agenda for formal approval at the next meeting in January 2021.

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Before addressing these questions, the DCAF would like to make some overarching comments regarding the emphasis and direction of this consultation.

The DCAF deplures the consultation's urban approach. While national planning policy clearly needs to take a view on development in urban areas, it should also recognise the different requirements of rural areas. Authorities should take a localised approach not just to design, but also to matters such as any levy. Appropriate small-scale development will require a different approach on many matters, including green space and levies, than larger urban ones. Local authorities should have the ability to make a decision about requirements and to tailor any levy/arrangements accordingly.

With regard to rural areas four points are critical:

1. The needs of rural areas for new homes and businesses are very different to urban areas and policy needs to take account of this. Development should seek to protect and enhance green space;
2. there must be local decision making, including on matters such as siting, design, greenspace, infrastructure links etc;
3. there must be local determination of the amount and necessity of any levy or other arrangements;
4. there is an assumption that broadband speeds are fast enough across the country yet, in many rural areas, speeds are extremely poor and this needs to be addressed in terms of new developments, home working and ability to deal digitally with the planning changes proposed.

## Response to consultation questions

**3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?**

**[Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that the ability to access plans and contribute views should continue to be available in a variety of ways. Newspapers should still be included as well as local libraries, some of which have digital noticeboards. Putting up notices locally still provides a useful way to inform affected residents. Unless people are signed up to planning alerts, they may be unaware of what is being proposed.

**4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]**

It is inappropriate to prioritise between competing and important considerations. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that these need to be kept in balance and priorities should be relevant to the local area. In terms of the Forum's remit, high level objectives would be implementing a sustainable transport system and excellent green space provision. These complimentary themes would also deliver on biodiversity and climate change mitigation priorities.

The Government publication, [Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#), states “The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. We expect sustainable transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that opportunities to promote cycling and walking are pursued. Planning policies should already provide for high quality cycling and walking networks, green spaces and green routes, and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans).” The Devon Countryside Access Forum agrees that these aspirations, which accord with its position statements, should be embedded in planning priorities.

The priorities specified in question 4 should include additional and improved green spaces and not solely focus on their protection.

The purpose of the priorities should be to ensure that important social, economic and environmental goods, that cannot be delivered through market forces, are put in place.

## **5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals?**

### **No**

The detail in Local Plans is required to consider the complexity. The Devon Countryside Access Forum agrees that some level of simplified national guidance on which to hang fundamental local policies would be useful if this reduced the size of documents and made them more accessible. People respond well to maps and the DCAF would support an increased use of these provided there was sufficient detail.

Many Local Plans for rural areas cover large geographical areas with a varying suite of policies. Detail is needed to address the differing requirements of towns, villages and countryside areas. Algorithms for housing requirements can lose sight of physical topography such as floodplains and steep hills.

## **10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?**

### **No**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is not convinced that the use of national codes, data standards and templates will be sufficient to deal with the complexity of some applications. The public should continue to have the ability to comment.

## **11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?**

### **Not sure**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would agree in principle, but a certain level of detail is required, plus accessibility, to ensure that people can respond adequately. People who are partially sighted, deaf or have a range of special needs may not be able to access web-based plans.

Many rural areas have woefully inadequate broadband and people in these areas may not be able to download large documents, particularly maps. Other people may not have computers and should not be disenfranchised.

Within the map-based zones, it will be important to map both proposed green space and existing green space, public rights of way, recreational trails and cycle routes as these can

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inform Local Plan zones (growth, renewal and protection) and the concept and delivery of planning proposals. Mapping should include information on the quality and accessibility of greenspace.

## **12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30-month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?**

### **Not sure**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes the idea that the public can participate at an earlier stage in the development process. However, there would appear to be fewer opportunities to engage with the Local Plan at a later stage which is when the public know what is being proposed and are more likely to wish to express views.

Over time people move and priorities change so concerns early in the Local Plan preparation may get superseded or changed and people should have the ability to exercise their democratic rights to make representations when development affects them or their community.

## **13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?**

### **Yes**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum agrees that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained. They offer the opportunity for local areas to contribute a level of expertise and knowledge. Neighbourhood Plans can be critical in challenging planning agreements and planning authority policy. This is regarded as a positive part of local democracy and can lead to ambitious community preference and design.

## **13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is concerned that use of sophisticated digital tools may be beyond the capacity of local voluntary groups' skills and resources. Everyone needs to be able to contribute to a Neighbourhood Plan. The facility to hold public meetings and focus groups to engage the community is integral to the success of a Plan in reflecting local opinion.

## **16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area?**

**[Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum does not feel it appropriate to select one of the above statements. The sustainable design process should deliver all these – and more.

Better and connected tree-lined pedestrian and cycle access ways are required away from traffic, not just painted lines on a road. This is not necessarily a cheaper option.

The DCAF strongly agrees with the statement in the Government publication Gear Change:

“Cycle infrastructure must join together, or join other facilities together by taking a holistic, connected network approach which recognises the importance of nodes, links and areas that are good for cycling.”

“Routes should be planned holistically as part of a network. Isolated stretches of provision, even if it is good are of little value. Developing a connected network is more than lines on a map. It is about taking local people on a journey with you in order to understand who currently cycles, where they go and why they go there and, more importantly, who does not currently cycle and why.”

Planned and long-term maintenance of public open space and access should be included as part of sustainability proposals.

## **17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?**

### **Not sure**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum agrees these could be helpful in assisting developers and ensuring good design. However, design guides and codes should extend more widely than housing design and include proposals for associated infrastructure such as green space and cycling/walking trails. Critical to standards should also be aspects such as green space standards and accessible natural green space standards (ANGsT). A green levy based on ANGsT could be introduced as part of the code and include details regarding the collecting authority, timing in relation to development and future maintenance.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum’s position statements are attached to indicate the additional things that could be included, not necessarily as fixed standards but as guides to development. (*DCAF Planning Position Statement 2015 – Appendix 1; DCAF Neighbourhood Plan Position Statement 2016 – Appendix 2; and DCAF Greenspace Position Statement 2019 – Appendix 3*).

The consultation includes the following:

“We will publish a National Model Design Code to supplement the (National Design) guide, setting out more detailed parameters for development in different types of location: issues such as the arrangement and proportions of streets and urban blocks, positioning and hierarchy of public spaces, successful parking arrangements, placement of street trees, and high quality cycling and walking provision, in line with our wider vision for cycling and walking in England. It will be accompanied by worked examples, and complement a revised and consolidated Manual for Streets.”

The DCAF is concerned that the codes appear urban-centric and advises that these should be rural-proofed to ensure that any design guides, at national or local level, incorporate the complexity of rural areas where schemes may be much smaller and physically constrained. It is not clear how guidelines will differ across the growth, renewal and protected areas, for example the provision of high-quality cycling and walking routes.

## **20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would welcome more beautiful places but advises that it is important that a fast-track system does not neglect sustainable design processes

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and associated infrastructure, such as better and safer pedestrian and cycle ways within a green or tree-lined environment. Greenspace needs to be accessible and not located on a floodplain.

Standardisation is not always a good thing and the concept of 'beauty' is not necessarily something that people locally will agree on.

The Forum advises that it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the countryside in rural areas is often not accessible for people. The [Living with Beauty report](#) has an overwhelming focus on urban areas yet such aspirations are equally applicable to rural areas.

**Proposal 15: We intend to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits**

**Proposal 16: We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England.**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes that there are no questions on the above proposals and would welcome the opportunity to be consulted.

## **Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy**

**21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it? [More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know / Other – please specify]**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum suggests it is not possible to choose between important priorities. Within the DCAF's remit, sustainable transport opportunities and the provision of well-maintained green space would be highly important.

**22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?**

### **Not sure**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum agrees the funding of infrastructure to support development is a complex and highly technical issue. The introduction of CIL imposed a significant administrative burden on local authorities and has led to much litigation. Many planning authorities have not adopted CIL and rely on negotiated section 106 obligations which are criticised for their opaqueness. To respond fully to the question posed requires substantial knowledge and far greater detail as to how a new 'consolidated Infrastructure Levy' would be calculated and administered. If the Government is intent on introducing a new system, the DCAF responds to the question by expressing some desired outcomes for any new system:

- No planning authority, in particular those in a rural situation, to be disadvantaged financially by the adoption of a new system;
- A recognition that rural schemes, often starting from scratch, can require a larger proportion of funds to provide adequate infrastructure;
- Identification and protection of funds, as part of the new infrastructure levy charged to developers, for the creation of access and green spaces and their future long-term maintenance;
- A methodology that allows small rural schemes to be fully funded;
- Sufficient flexibility to encourage an appropriate variation in development schemes put forward, while not compromising green infrastructure requirements.

There are also cross (Local Planning Authority) border infrastructure provision matters which are not addressed. For example, in relation to access, cycling and walking routes or multi-use trails can be a particular issue. The duty to cooperate, if dispensed with, should be replaced with some safeguards to ensure consideration of such problems.

## **22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?**

### **Locally**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that a local rate would be more appropriate and could be variable according to local circumstances and development values. This could include green space and its long-term maintenance and adoption. The levy needs to be responsive, particularly in rural areas where schemes are likely to be smaller. A local rate could also allow determination of when the rate is collected. It is important that there is the ability to nuance an approach to suit a local area.

Local Authorities should have the ability to implement infrastructure provision, such as green space, in a timely and certain way.

## **22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities?**

**[Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure.  
Please provide supporting statement.]**

It is clear that the value of development has not always been matched by the value of infrastructure, affordable housing and local community facilities, such as green space. The need to provide bespoke agreements regarding particular issues should be retained as a 'one fits all' approach will not be sufficient to deal with such matters in rural areas.

## **25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?**

### **Yes**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that it would be helpful for local authorities to have greater autonomy so that local priorities and community aspirations can be met. There may be additional or improved access routes or green space that would be a beneficial use of Infrastructure Levy funding.

The current COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the popularity and importance of green space to peoples' health and well-being.

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This letter constitutes formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is required to have regard to relevant advice from the Forum in carrying out its functions.

Yours faithfully



Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum.*

*Chair: Sarah Slade*

*Vice Chair: Chris Cole*

## Changes to The Highway Code: improving safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders

### Your details

Q1. Your (used for contact details only):
<b>name?</b> Hilary Winter
<b>email?</b> hilary.winter@devon.gov.uk

Q2. Are you responding:
on behalf of an organisation?

### Organisation details

Q3. What is the name of your organisation?
Devon Countryside Access Forum. 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..." It has a statutory function to give advice to the Secretary of State for any Government Department. The DCAF currently has fifteen 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.

### Hierarchy of road users

Q5. Do you agree with the introduction of new Rule H1?
Yes

### Hierarchy of users wording

Q7. Is the proposed wording easy to understand?
No

### Disagree with hierarchy of users wording

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## Q8. Why not?

The Devon Countryside Access Forum supports in principle a hierarchy of road users. However, it advises that certain changes should be made to make this hierarchy clearer.

- 1) The public need to have a clear understanding of the hierarchy and where their use fits into that. A visual depiction would be most helpful.
- 2) Electric bikes and scooters have not been included in the hierarchy and it would be useful to do so.
- 3) The paragraph referring to people with impaired sight does not include people with learning difficulties who may react in a different way to expected.
- 4) Dog walkers have not been specifically mentioned yet are an important category of user that drivers, cyclists and equestrians might encounter. Road users need to be aware of potentially unpredictable behaviour and dogs on extendable leads. Equally, dog walkers need to be aware that dog behaviour and extendable leads could be a particular danger to cyclists.

Most importantly, any revisions to the Highway Code need to be embedded in people's minds. Unless this happens, it will be ineffective. Consideration therefore needs to be given to appropriate stages in education where it could be taught plus additional and regular publicity, for example public service broadcasts or advertisements and use of social media. This happens in Germany where public service broadcasts and a road safety app are essential tools for promoting safe travel.

## Rules for cyclists

Q25. Do you agree with the proposed change to rule 63?

Yes

## Rule 63 for cyclists wording: shared spaces

Q27. Is the proposed wording easy to understand?

No

## Disagrees with Rule 63 for cyclists wording: shared spaces

### Q28. Why not?

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that simple messages are likely to be more effective, such as 'share with care'.

The paragraph about deaf, blind or partially sighted pedestrians should include people with learning difficulties.

It is not clear what classifies as 'closely or at high speed' as this is a subjective assessment and open to interpretation. Passing very slowly and with extreme care would be a more appropriate message.

There may be situations where the safest option is to get off a cycle, for example at a narrow bridge. This should be included in the wording.

Forum members recognise the importance of letting users know you are there but are not sure whether cycle bells should be made compulsory. A bell could give a cyclist a false sense of security and encourage speed but, at the same time, it is useful to give audible advance warning.

## Using the road

Q46. Do you agree that cyclists may pass slower moving traffic on their right or left as detailed in Rule 163?

No

## Disagree with using the road: passing on the right or left

Q47. Why not?

On balance, the Devon Countryside Access Forum would prefer the rule about overtaking on the right to be observed. Traffic that is slow moving or stationary may suddenly move at a higher speed.

## Using the road

Q48. Do you agree with the proposed speed limits detailed at Rule 163 for overtaking:

	Yes	No	Don't know?
motorcyclists?		X	
cyclists?		X	
horse riders?		X	
horse drawn vehicles?		X	

### If no, why not?

The Devon Countryside Access Forum disagrees with the proposed speed limits for overtaking. A simple 'share with care' message should be promoted: sharing with consideration and respect for other people at all times. Again, the low speed message is too vague and reference should be made to care.

The speed and passing distances are urban-centric. In many rural areas there is no road space to permit a 2.0m passing distance and speeds may need to be much lower than those proposed. Drivers need to be aware that they may need to stop and allow a more vulnerable user to pass as well as holding back if it is not possible to overtake.

Dog walkers are not included and additional care may be needed in case dogs are on extendable leads. Nor is reference made to livestock which may be alongside or crossing roads where adjacent land is unfenced.

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Q49. Do you agree with the proposed passing distances detailed at Rule 163 for overtaking:

	Yes	No	Don't know?
motorcyclists?		X	
cyclists?		X	
horse riders?		X	
horse drawn vehicles?		X	

**If no, why not?**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum disagrees with the proposed speed and passing distances. The distinction between 1.5m and 2.0m is minimal and the 2.0m should be a standard. A simple 'share with care' message should be promoted: sharing with consideration and respect for other people at all times.

The speed and passing distances are urban-centric. In many rural areas there is no space to permit a 2.0m passing distance. Drivers need to be aware that they may need to stop and allow a more vulnerable user to pass as well as holding back if it is not possible to overtake.

Dog walkers are not included and additional care may be needed in case dogs are on extendable leads. Nor is reference made to livestock which may be alongside or crossing roads where adjacent land is unfenced.

Q50. Is the proposed wording easy to understand?

No

## Disagrees with Rule 163 for using the road wording: overtaking

Q51. Why not?

A simple 'share with care' message should be promoted: sharing with consideration and respect for other people at all times. Again, the low speed message is too vague and reference should be made to care.

The speed and passing distances are urban-centric. Drivers need to be aware that they may need to stop and allow a more vulnerable user to pass as well as holding back if it is not possible to overtake.

Dog walkers are not included and additional care may be needed in case dogs are on extendable leads. Nor is reference made to livestock which may be alongside or crossing roads where adjacent land is unfenced.

## Road users requiring extra care

Q64. Do you have any further comments about other changes proposed in the chapter on road users requiring extra care?

The Devon Countryside Access Forum recommends that dog walkers and livestock should be included as categories of road user that drivers might encounter.



**Devon Countryside Access Forum**  
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Mr D Roberts Bsc (Hons) MRTPI  
Principal Planning Officer- Central Team  
East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House  
Border Road,  
Heathpark Industrial Estate,  
Honiton, EX14 1EJ

15 November 2020

Dear Mr Roberts

## **20/2089/MFUL – Lower Otter Restoration Project**

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 East Devon District Council and the Environment Agency.

The DCAF currently has fifteen 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.

This response will be on the agenda for formal approval at the next Devon Countryside Access Forum meeting on 21 January 2021. The Forum’s position statements, and previous advice, support the following observations.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes and welcomes the fact that many of its comments made in 2014 have been taken on board in the proposals for this project. The Forum recognises that without action some of the important and very popular recreational routes could be lost in future due to rising sea levels.

The Forum is not commenting on the environmental, habitat and landscape changes which are likely to be significant and will provide a different experience. It is

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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nonetheless important that people's overall enjoyment of this area from the recreational access perspective is not diminished.

## **Scheme access improvements**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum has some suggestions which could improve the recreational access benefit of the project and these are outlined below. The numbers refer to the scheme overview graphic:

### **1. Shingle bar (number 10)**

This circular walk is relatively level and enjoyed by people who cannot walk far as it gives both sea and estuary views. The Forum notes the intention to remove the path on the rear of the shingle spit and to shorten the path on the crest. It would be appreciated if a way could be found to provide a short circular walk at this point.

### **2. New South West Coast Path footpath bridge**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes the accessibility of this bridge and the proposed gradients to join it. However, the graphic 3.6 – Pedestrian footbridge parapet detail - looks too enclosed for children or people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters to enjoy the views. The Forum requests that consideration is given to 'vision ports', gaps in the cladding, or use of see-through materials to overcome this.

### **3. Viewing areas**

The erection of viewing areas at several locations is supported. However, it is unclear whether these will include seating areas. This would be helpful for people wishing to sit and enjoy the views

### **4. Gates**

The changes proposed provide an opportunity to ensure that all gates are accessible. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that widths should be 1.5m and gates should open easily on the correct alignment. Correct hinges should be used plus, preferably, trombone handles to facilitate easy opening. Gradients approaching the gates should permit easy access and surfaces compacted enough to allow use of pushchairs or wheeled mobility vehicles. The Devon Countryside Access Forum's position statement on disability is attached (Appendix 1) and, as cited in the statement, the Disabled Ramblers' website has comprehensive information on standards. [Disabled Ramblers - Least Restrictive Access](#)

Reference is made to a 'pedestrian gate' north of South Farm Road at the start of Otterton FP 1. It is important that this meets accessibility standards, taking into account land manager's concerns about livestock.

### **5. South Farm Road chicanes**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that the chicanes should be of appropriate design to allow mobility vehicles through

### **6. Budleigh Salterton FP 12 (FAB Link route) (number 27)**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes the proposals to increase the height of this route and make it 'an all-ability' surface. It would be helpful to

define 'all-ability'. The addition of boardwalks or raising the ground levels may be required to ensure this route is available more frequently and not just in "the majority of tidal conditions".

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes that the National Cycle Network route crosses South Farm Road before using the road network to approach Budleigh Salterton. As part of this significant project, it would seem an ideal opportunity to assess whether cyclists could be provided with an off-road route through this new landscape. The Forum recommends that Budleigh Salterton FP 12 could be a cycle/shared use route linking South Farm Road at the western end to Lime Kiln car park, with a safe exit onto Salting Hill/Granary Lane, subject to consideration of design and width and involvement of project partners and Fab Link. The Cycle Tracks Act 1984 could be a mechanism to achieve this. Cyclists could be directed this way on an improved path, rather than the current situation where cyclists attempt to use Budleigh Salterton FP 2 as an illegal cut-through.

## **7. Otterton to White Bridge**

Although it falls just outside the planning application area, the Devon Countryside Access Forum aspires to create an accessible route along Otterton FP 1 to exit at Otterton.

### **Matters in the planning application requiring further consideration**

The Forum has some concerns which it feels need to be addressed or expanded on.

#### **a) Planning application processes**

To minimise disruption to the public rights of way network and the South West Coast Path, the Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that it is imperative for the Lower Otter Valley Restoration Project and the Fab Link Project to work closely together and, in particular, to ensure the continuity and resilience of Budleigh Salterton FP 12. The Forum has made suggestions to improve this route in point 6, above. All works relevant to this area of land should have been presented for consideration at the same time, so that consultees and members of the public could assess the overall impact and have confidence that proposals in the application could be achieved.

#### **b) Car park (number 9)**

The footpaths along this valley are particularly well-used and some of the most popular in the County. The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes the new car park but is not convinced that it will provide the number of spaces required, particularly if new visitors are attracted by the new landscape and parking is no longer permitted on South Farm Road. At certain times of year provision of car parking may be insufficient and the Forum suggests that additional car parking could be made available on a section of the old landfill site.

#### **c) Breach of the Big Bank and Little Bank (numbers 3 and 4)**

The resilience of the footpath network across the banks is unclear. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that the proposals to lower the footpaths at these points could lead to significant amounts of fluvial and high tide deposits. The accumulation of mud and other debris at regular intervals

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will add significantly to maintenance costs as well as meaning that the routes could be impassable, particularly for pushchairs and mobility scooters/wheelchairs. The current tidal footpath near Topsham is unusable for much of the time.

The use of higher-level boardwalks, allowing water underneath, could be one option to explore although the Forum recognises these would also have to be maintained. These have been used on the Exe Estuary trail. Long term maintenance funding should be explored and incorporated as part of the project cost.

**d) East Budleigh FP 3, western edge of Northern Big Marsh (number 20)**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum has concerns about the provision of refuges in times of high tide. Some members of the public may not read emergency warning notices or be aware of how quickly tide levels can change or the speed of water. Many people are unaware of tide times. It is not clear whether the refuges would be required every high tide or only in exceptionally high tides. Equally, it is unclear whether the raised path levels will accommodate the highest projected levels of freshwater and tidal water.

Securing safe higher ground access routes over private land will need to take into account land management requirements and be extremely well-signed. Gates would need to be suitable for all users.

**e) Temporary diversions**

As previously stated, these are very popular paths, with 250,000 people annually using the South West Coast Path (SWCP) at this point. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that temporary diversions during construction work need to be well-signed and promoted and kept to the minimum possible time.

The Design and Access Statement states that the diversion of the SWCP route during construction of the new pedestrian bridge will be along Budleigh Salterton FP 12 and FP 3. It is not entirely clear how the timing of the restoration project and the FAB Link project work on these footpaths will occur to facilitate this.

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

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

*Response sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum*

*Chair: Sarah Slade  
Vice Chair: Chris Cole*

**Devon Countryside Access Forum response  
Teign Estuary Trail – Devon County Council consultation  
Submitted to online survey – December 2020**

1. Do you support the construction of the Teign Estuary Trail?

Yes

2. Please explain your answer to Question 1

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes this extension to the shared-use trail network in the County and the benefits it will bring to sustainable transport and health and well-being. However, the Forum would like to raise a number of matters for consideration related to the construction of the trail.

- a. The Forum strongly advises that the whole route (from The Passage House Inn to Morrison's, Teignmouth) is done at the same time. If the road section along the A381 is a separate project, many people could come out onto the footpath and main road which would be unsuitable and potentially dangerous.
- b. In exploring and applying for funding for this route, the Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that long term maintenance considerations must be borne in mind and costed, particularly for vegetation trimming, bound surface maintenance, boardwalks and interpretation boards. It is often the revenue sum which is lacking in project management. The route should be enjoyable and consistently maintained to a good standard throughout. Similarly, responsibilities for these important areas of work must be identified.
- c. As a result of the current emphasis on health improvement and wellbeing and the increase in use of such trails during coronavirus, the Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that a warden for this trail, or a number of trails, who could liaise with individuals or groups would greatly assist in encouraging responsible use of the trail.
- d. The Devon Countryside Access Forum strongly advises that Devon County Council should take account of landowners' concerns and seek to reach agreement rather than going through the Compulsory Purchase Order route.
- e. The inclusion of design features to ensure accessibility is integral to the scheme, for example a gradient of 1 in 12 and appropriate ramps and manoeuvring space on corners. The Forum welcomes good practice from other successful schemes such as near Powderham on the Exe Estuary Trail.
- f. The height and appearance of the proposed Network Rail fencing (1.8m weldmesh fence) is not aesthetic and options to reduce the height or limit the impact would be appreciated.
- g. The inclusion of raised seating and viewing areas would contribute to people's enjoyment of estuary views.

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- h. Given the likely use of the route and its popularity, the Devon Countryside Access Forum is concerned about limited dedicated parking, noting the available parking at Michael's Field in Bishopsteignton. If the Passage House Inn or Morrisons do not permit non-customers to park, there could be parking issues on nearby lanes. It is imperative to address this at the outset.
  - i. Lack of disabled toilet facilities is an issue on some trails. The Forum would encourage Devon County Council to ensure that provision is made for public use through discussions with the Passage House Inn, Morrisons and, potentially, Otter Jack's Patch Nursery.
  - j. The improvements to the A381 to facilitate safer use of the route are welcome as this is a very unsafe route for cyclists and pedestrians currently. The widened footway, narrowed carriageway and reduced speed limit will facilitate this. The Forum advises that similar improvements are made to the A381 going west towards Bishopsteignton from La Roche Maurice Way to encourage safe use of the trail by people from that community. It is important that the chicanes meeting the road, including those adjacent to the proposed toucan Crossing, allow for easy access by mobility scooters.
  - k. The Forum recommends full shared-use and road safety audits to ensure no problems are overlooked.
3. Do you support this proposed route for the Teign Estuary Trail between Passage House Inn and Morrisons' junction, Teignmouth?

Yes

4. Please explain your answer to Question 3

Whilst a route south of the railway would have had uninterrupted views of the estuary, the Devon Countryside Access Forum recognises the cost and landowner and ecological considerations that have not made this possible. Achieving a route to the north of the railway will at least allow this long-anticipated trail to be realised.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would like to see an additional exit/access point on the route and, ideally, a route through Otter Jack's Patch Nursery would offer huge benefits and allow more options. This would also provide a circular route via the Luxton Steps trail access point. While recognising the ecological and safety reasons for preventing access onto or off the trail from Flow Lane, some pedestrians may try to find a way on to the trail at this point and this is a concern.

Where it is suggested that Bishopsteignton FP 13 allows an access to the trail to the west of Bishopsteignton from/to Luxton Steps, this should be legally upgraded to allow cycle use and be of the appropriate width and surface. The short footpath alongside the A381 to the current controlled crossing point should meet the same 3m trail specifications.

As a medium to long term intention the Forum would like to see a safe and easy to use extension of the trail into Teignmouth itself and beyond. Many potential users on the trail are likely to wish to go on further.

## CLYST VALLEY REGIONAL PARK MASTERPLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

East Devon District Council

Devon Countryside Access Forum response – submitted online

### A. VISION

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision and values for a Clyst Valley Regional Park. If anything less than strongly agree, please tell us how you would improve the vision and values.

Strongly agree	
Tend to agree	<b>x</b>
Neither agree or disagree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	

The Devon Countryside Access Forum welcomes the aspiration to provide additional green space and linear routes in the area to the East of Exeter and connectivity between different projects. The overarching intention and initiatives are worthy of strong support and the Masterplan includes good objectives. The Forum's comments relate specifically to the access elements which fall within its remit.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum does have concerns about the term Regional Park. It feels this is a misnomer and could lead to high expectations from the public who may expect to access all the area and have a park type experience. Much of the area is private land including working farms, some tenanted. It is also problematic if not all projects are achievable. The coronavirus pandemic has led to many new users accessing the countryside so the concept, and where land is accessible, needs to be clearly understood.

The core values should be amended to include one focussing on community and personal health and wellbeing and how this should influence and guide project development.

The Vision needs to be long term and include an ongoing investment in education and community engagement and ensuring all open spaces and routes in the area are well maintained in perpetuity.

It would have been helpful to have the separate delivery plan for the Clyst Valley Trail at this juncture.

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## B. OBJECTIVES

**2. Do you agree or disagree with our objectives for the Clyst Valley Regional Park. If you disagree with any of the objectives, please tell us why and how you would improve them.** For more information see the draft Masterplan 2020 – 2040

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
To enhance the health and well-being of residents by creating a network of walking and cycling routes linking home, work, school and high-quality green space.			x
To protect internationally important wildlife sites, increase the amount and quality of high priority natural habitat, and the populations of key species.			x
To increase the absorption of greenhouse gases through land use management and change.			x
To achieve good water quality in the River Clyst and tributaries and enhance natural flood storage.			x
To restore landscape character and promote local distinctiveness and to maintain the high landscape setting of Killerton.		x	
To protect historic sites, buildings and landscapes and restore them for public enjoyment.		x	
To increase and sustain jobs through diversification of rural businesses.			x

As a whole the objectives are laudable, but the Devon Countryside Access Forum would welcome additional information and a survey question about outcomes and precisely how success will be measured, rather than vague performance indicators. The objectives are written more tightly than the Vision and Core Values, but some big questions remain unanswered.

The projects include little by way of new land but include plenty of new footpaths and connections. The Devon Countryside Access Forum disagreed with the statement about Killerton and the one on protecting historic sites, buildings and landscapes as it felt these were current projects in progress that were not being provided specifically by this project. These might need to be re-worded. For example, it is not entirely clear whether the statement about landscape and Killerton refers just to Killerton or the whole Masterplan area.

It is vitally important that people are able to access the network of walking and cycling routes directly from communities such as Cranbrook.

**3. Please tell us about any objectives you would add.**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that the objectives should include one about educating users in responsible use of the countryside. This could be added to the 'People' objective.

## C. FUNDING STRATEGY

- 4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with how we're proposing to pay for the Clyst Valley Regional Park. If anything less than strongly agree, please tell us how you think it can be funded differently.**

Strongly agree	
Tend to agree	<b>X</b>
Neither agree nor disagree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	

The list incorporates the main agencies available to fund whole or part projects in the area.

- 5. Please tell us about any other sources of funding that you think we've missed in our funding strategy:**

The document does not necessarily miss sources of funding, but it is important to ensure that applications for funding do not miss essential elements. As the Devon Countryside Access Forum has mentioned on many occasions, the future maintenance of both green space and linear routes is critical to their success as outdoor space that people will enjoy using over a long period of time. Standards need to be good and consistent. The maintenance is critical, particularly for boardwalks, surfacing and other access scheme elements within flood plain areas (40% of the proposed park area). It is often easier to get capital money to develop a project, but mechanisms need to be considered for long term maintenance, whether this is a Trust Fund, some form of management company or local authority involvement. This needs to be established at the outset.

It would be interesting to know how many projects will be funded by developer contributions and whether some of the projects are in fact providing green space which should be part of developer contributions. The Devon Countryside Access Forum visited Cranbrook in 2016 and at that time there was talk about a link north to Killerton.

The funding strategy should include consideration of any interpretation projects and works agreed with landowners who allow a route across their land.

- 6. We're thinking about setting up a not-for-profit organisation to help support delivery of the Clyst Valley Regional Park. This might help us to create and manage more greenspace and trails for the public. How much would you be willing to pay per year to support this not-for-profit organisation?**

It is not possible to answer this question but it does convey the message that there is a cost. A not-for-profit organisation is useful in accessing funding.

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## D. THE PROJECTS

### 7. Please tell us the codes of the projects that you think should be our top priority:

It is difficult to answer without overarching principles to determine which projects have the greatest impact in terms of aspirations and delivery, enhancing quality of life and other important considerations. There is a need for some kind of filter or sieve to try and work through the projects and prioritise them to ensure the best access to quality green space and routes. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that there is the danger that what's deliverable is achieved, rather than necessarily the best projects to fulfil the key criteria.

### 8. If you disagree with any of the projects, please:

- give the project code
- tell us why you disagree
- tell us of any improvements you would make to that project

No answer

### 9. Please tell us about any comments you have on any of the other projects. Please make sure you include the project code.

The purpose of the Masterplan states that "*it does not describe projects in detail but lists potential projects.*" In fact, there is a lot of detail.

The access elements of the Masterplan include the Clyst Valley trail which will be achieved through permissive paths, quiet lanes, minor roads and upgrades to existing footpaths. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that a road safety audit and multi-use audit is required to ensure that the Clyst Valley Trail route is safe and usable for all users, including disability users and horse-riders. One of the core values refers to the proposals being "inclusive for everyone" and "multi-use where practical and achievable." The projects should seek to achieve the highest possible benefits for all users and this should be made clear in funding applications and in negotiations with affected landowners and tenants. Equally, a multi-use audit is required on other land, such as Daneshill Wood, Ashclyst Forest and Bishops Court to ensure these sites are accessible and issues of access are resolved. Where multi-use cannot be achieved there needs to be confidence from the public that it has been assessed.

The principle of a Clyst Valley Trail from Topsham to Killerton is a great aspiration. There are some concerns about practical issues, for example the narrowness of some paths, where paths meet roads, concrete ramps on farmland and path furniture such as stiles and gates which would impede disability access and horse riders. The Forum expects that these matters will be resolved in the course of compiling the Clyst Valley Trail delivery plan. Paths on the National Trust land at Ashclyst will require work to provide a good standard for the potential volume and different type of user. Use of Ashclyst Forest would undoubtedly be significantly higher than at present.

The connectivity between access routes is key and fundamental to the success of this. Some projects are very aspirational, some are readily achievable, and others have already been completed.

Not all routes have legal status as public rights of way or any certainty of prolonged use. A number of permissive paths are suggested; projects CA1, CCC2, BC and PPC. Where these can be agreed with landowners, they can be helpful in filling gaps in access where it cannot be achieved through other means. Discussions should take place with landowners / managers at the earliest stage in the process. It is very important that agreements are made about standards and maintenance on permissive paths to try and achieve consistent standards.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes the large number of routes termed 'traffic-free'. To ensure that expectations are not raised, it would be helpful for much greater clarity on these routes as 'traffic-free' would indicate a complete absence of motorised traffic. If routes are to be promoted to the public seeking to access green space, trails and public rights of way in the 'park' area, then people need confidence about what to expect and that routes are of a consistent standard. Details on how improved access and shared use has been pragmatically assessed to ensure safe and inclusive use would be helpful. The project should aim to benefit the maximum number of users including walkers, cyclists (including family groups), dog walkers, disability access users and horse riders. Those 'traffic-free' routes need to be audited accordingly to ascertain whether they can be segregated multi-use 'off-road trails' or, if horse use cannot be accommodated, segregated cycle/walking lanes. The Sustrans guide <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/walking-and-cycling-infrastructure-design-guidance/> and existing good practice for multi-use trail development within Devon County Council will assist in this process.

Several projects mention footpaths or bridleways and, in some instances, upgrades to a bridleway or to form part of the Clyst Valley Trail (projects CCC5, LC, CA2). The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that consideration needs to be given to the legal process and aspects such as surfacing to ensure access for all users. Projects should not seek to benefit individual businesses which might not be sustainable in the long run, for example the proposed bridleway WLM.

The projects mention Quiet Lanes (Projects BASH, CA1, CA2, CB1, CRAIR, CWH1, KASH, PSC, SP and WEX). This is a legal process allowing speed limits and signage and can be objected to. Many of the minor roads in that area are used as 'rat runs' and not necessarily safe routes for a promoted trail. This is where a Road Safety audit would be particularly helpful.

One of the projects (SL) refers to green lane when it is in fact an unsurfaced, unclassified, county road which is ambiguous as that route would be available for motorised users too.

The Forum advises that the Masterplan should make the connections between projects clearer.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that elements of the projects overall could potentially lead to anti-social behaviour on routes and land. This aspect has not been fully considered and there is no mention of dog ownership and responsibilities. Encouraging use

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by the public and campaigns aimed at health improvements and general well-being, as well as responsible use of the countryside and trails, could be assisted by a warden/ranger. A warden was previously in post in Cranbrook and this type of initiative should be long-term.

**10. If there are any other projects you'd like to see added in, please tell us about them:**

No answer.



## **Countryside Code Refresh – invitation to participate in a Survey**

Natural England has a statutory duty to produce and promote the Countryside Code to guide people visiting the countryside. It also has a duty to advise landowners and managers in relation to access on their land.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of visits to the countryside increased. Much of this was to be welcomed, given the many health and wellbeing benefits provided to people through outdoor exercise and contact with nature. There were, however, a number of incidences across the country of undesirable actions and activities taking place, including damage to property and the environment. Many of these incidents came about as the result of a lack of understanding of how to engage positively with the natural environment, rather than by deliberate acts of damage.

In response, Natural England published an updated short version of the Countryside Code accompanied by a summer-long campaign to promote the safe enjoyment of the countryside, in partnership with stakeholders.

Now that we have more time to reflect over the winter period, Natural England is seeking your views on how we can refresh the Countryside Code. We plan to update the short version of the Code, aimed at visitors the countryside, as well as the longer, full version. We are planning to produce two versions of the full Code – one aimed at visitors to the countryside, and one aimed at landowners and land managers.

It is our intention that the new Code feels relevant to as wide an audience as possible and particularly for children, young people and those parts of our communities we know (e.g. from the People and Nature survey) don't access the countryside as often – such as those from low income areas, urban areas, ethnic minority backgrounds, younger people and people with long term health conditions. To help us with this ambition, we want to ensure that as many of these groups' views are collected in this refresh.

The work to refresh the Code is now getting underway, with an aim to be ready to welcome people back into the countryside in spring 2021 with greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Our work will essentially be divided into two phases: the refresh of the detail of the Code in time for Easter and an associated campaign running from then and beyond, throughout 2021, which will include a broader conversation with stakeholders about what a 'post-Covid' Code for the 21st century would look like and how we can, as a sector, promote more positive behaviours and awareness. Any changes will be based on the views of a range of stakeholders, some of which will be new to this work.

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## SURVEY QUESTIONS (after contact details)

### 1. We would like to know a little more about your particular interest(s) in the Countryside Code. Are you interested in the Code as...

- A farmer/farming representative (including farm advisors and land agents)
- A land owner/land manager
- A member of the public – visitor to rural / coastal areas
- A member of the public – visitor to urban greenspaces
- A representative of a specific kind of user group
- Someone who has promoted, or wishes to promote, the Code
- A representative of your community
- A professional working in the environment sector
- An employee of Natural England
- A professional working in local or national government, or for a non-departmental body that isn't Natural England
- An academic
- Other

### 2. Prior to this survey, did you know that Natural England has a statutory duty to:

	Yes	No	Not sure
Produce and promote the Countryside Code, to guide people visiting the countryside?			
Advise land owners and land managers in relation to access on their land.			

This section is about how aware you are of each version of the Countryside Code.

### 3. How aware are you of the short version of the Code?

*This version was updated in July 2020, is aimed at visitors to the countryside, and is approximately 100 words long. You can view this version of the Code [here](#). (Please note that this link will open in the same window as the survey, unless you right-click and select 'open link in new tab'.)*

- I was not aware of the short version of the Code before taking this survey
- I was aware of the short version of the Code before taking this survey, but I have not read it
- I was aware of the short version of the Code and have read it at least once before taking this survey

## 4. Are you aware of the long version of the Code?

*This is the full version of the code, aimed at both visitors to the countryside and land owners and land managers, that is approximately 2000 words long. You can view this version of the Code [here](#). (Please note that this link will open in the same window as the survey, unless you right-click and select 'open link in new tab'.)*

- I was not aware of the long version of the Code before taking this survey
- I was aware of the long version of the Code before taking this survey, but have not read it
- I was aware of the long version of the Code and have read it at least once before taking this survey, but this was over a year ago
- I was aware of the long version of the Code before taking this survey and have read it at least once within the last year

This section is about how you use the Code at the moment, or how you have used it in the past.

## 5. Have you used or promoted: (please select all that apply)?

- The long version of the Code
- The short version of the Code

## 6. Which types of group do you work with or promote messages to, on any subject? (please select all that apply)

- local residents
- tourists and holiday makers
- walkers and ramblers
- horse riders
- cyclists
- canoeists, paddleboarders and recreational boaters
- anglers
- people using urban parks and greenspaces
- visitors to visitor attractions (such as nature reserves, country parks, beaches etc)
- dog walkers
- people who may be new visitors to the countryside people who have historically been under-represented in the countryside (e.g. from low income areas, urban areas, ethnic minority backgrounds, younger people and people with long term health conditions)
- people with diverse physical and sensory needs
- farmers / the farming sector
- the rural communities sector
- staff in your organisation
- local government
- professional networks
- I do not / the organisation I represent does not do any promotion to any groups on any subject

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**7. The current strapline of the Countryside Code is 'Respect-Protect-Enjoy'. Do you agree with any of the following statements?**  
 (You can select more than one, or none at all.)

- I think the current strapline is a great summary of the Code
- I was not really aware of the current strapline until now
- I use the current strapline in communications and promotions, at least some of the time
- I think the current strapline has good brand recognition

**8. This section is about what aspects of the Code, its use and promotion you consider to be most important.**

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think it is important that the Code applies to all types of countryside, including urban parks and greenspaces					
The Code is an important way to encourage more inclusive access to the countryside and coast					

**9. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?**

- The Code's main purpose is to welcome everyone into the countryside and natural places
- The Code's main purpose is to protect the countryside, natural places and rural communities
- These purposes are equally important

**10. How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below?**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think that there is generally a high level of awareness amongst the general public about the Countryside Code					

I think Natural England does a good job in promoting the Code					
It is only a small minority of people who do not comply with the Countryside Code					
The Code is important to set expectations of Responsible recreation					
There is evidence that the Code has led to behavioural change					
The Code is important to Encourage consideration of people with different physical and sensory needs					

**11. How important do you think the following aspects of the Code are?**

**To encourage people to...**

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors					
Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways is clear					
Leave gates and property as you find them					
Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow					
Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home					
Don't have BBQs or fires					
Keep dogs under effective control					
Dog poo – bag it and bin it					
Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared					
Follow advice and local signs and (whilst relevant) obey social distancing measures					

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**12. Natural England has a statutory duty to produce and promote the Countryside Code. How important do you think each aspect of Natural England's work is in relation to this duty?**

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Producing and updating the Code itself, i.e. agreeing Consistent wording that is endorsed by Government and partners					
Providing guidance on how to promote the Code					
Producing evidence on awareness, attitudes and behaviour of visitors to the countryside					
Evidence on awareness, attitudes and behaviour of land owners and land managers in relation to visitors to the countryside					
Supporting sector and Stakeholder facing communications					
Delivering public-facing communications / delivering a public campaign to promote the Code					
Providing advice to landowners and land managers in relation to managing access on their land					

**13. Which are the most important audiences for promoting the Code to? (please select all those that you consider to be particularly important)**

- local residents
- tourists and holidaymakers
- walkers and ramblers

- horse riders
- cyclists
- canoeists, paddleboarders and recreational boaters
- anglers
- people using urban parks and greenspaces
- visitors to visitor attractions (such as nature reserves, country parks, beaches etc)
- dog walkers
- people who may be new visitors to the countryside
- people who have historically been under-represented in the countryside (e.g. from low income areas, urban areas, ethnic minority backgrounds, younger people and people with long term health conditions)
- people with diverse physical and sensory needs
- farmers / the farming sector
- the rural communities sector
- staff in your organisation
- local government
- professional networks
- other

**14. If there is anything else you would like to tell us about those aspects of the Code, its use and promotion, that are most important to you, please tell us here.**

*This section is about our work to refresh the Countryside Code. When we update the long version of the Code, we plan to produce two versions: one for visitors to the countryside and one for land owners and land managers.*

**15. Which of the following should be included in the version of the Code aimed at visitors to the countryside? (please select all that apply)**

- encouraging visitors to consider the local community and other users
- parking
- gates
- following paths
- public Rights of Way
- access to different kinds of land (private, open access)
- access issues relating to rivers and waterbodies
- rights associated with the England Coast Path
- litter (using bins / taking litter home)
- BBQs and fires
- keeping dogs under control / on leads

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- picking up and disposing of dog poo responsibly
- restrictions on where dogs are permitted (and at what times)
- planning ahead
- following advice and signs
- understanding signs and symbols (including waymarking and dealing with unhelpful or misleading signage)
- sources of information (internet, guidebooks, maps, apps)
- safety (including e.g. lack of mobile signal, proximity to farm animals or farm machinery)
- not feeding animals (livestock or wild)
- general guidance about checking the weather forecast and tide timetables
- wild swimming / open water swimming
- wild (or nearly wild) camping / camping in unauthorised areas
- cycling

**16. What are the five most important activities or behaviours that should be included in the version of the Code aimed at visitors to the countryside? (please only select five from the following list)**

- signposting to user group or sector specific / geographically
- specific codes of conduct
- considering the local community and other users
- parking
- gates
- following paths
- public Rights of Way
- access to different kinds of land (private, open access)
- access issues relating to rivers and waterbodies
- rights associated with the England Coast Path
- litter (using bins / taking litter home)
- BBQs and fires
- keeping dogs under control / on leads
- picking up and disposing of dog poo responsibly
- restrictions on where dogs are permitted (and at what times)
- planning ahead
- following advice and signs
- understanding signs and symbols (including waymarking and dealing with unhelpful or misleading signage)

**17. Should the Countryside Code be explicitly expanded to encompass advice to visitors to all types of green and natural place, including urban parks?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**18. Should the Countryside Code aimed at visitors to the countryside include new items aimed at**

- sources of information (internet, guidebooks, maps, apps)
- safety (including e.g. lack of mobile signal, proximity to farm
- animals or farm machinery)
- not feeding animals (livestock or wild)
- general guidance about checking the weather forecast and
- tide timetables
- wild swimming / open water swimming
- wild (or nearly wild) camping / camping in unauthorised
- areas
- cycling
- signposting to user group or sector specific / geographically
- specific codes of conduct
- considering the local community and other users
- parking
- gates
- following paths
- public Rights of Way
- access to different kinds of land (private, open access)
- access issues relating to rivers and waterbodies
- rights associated with the England Coast Path
- litter (using bins / taking litter home)
- BBQs and fires
- keeping dogs under control / on leads
- picking up and disposing of dog poo responsibly
- restrictions on where dogs are permitted (and at what
- times)
- planning ahead
- following advice and signs
- understanding signs and symbols (including waymarking
- and dealing with unhelpful or misleading signage)

**19. Should the Countryside Code aimed at visitors to the countryside include new items aimed at increasing wellbeing and a closer connection to the natural world?**

- yes
- no
- don't know

**20. If you think there are any additional activities or behaviours that should be included in the refreshed Code aimed at visitors to the countryside, what are these?**

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**21. How important is it that the updated versions of the Code reach groups of people who might be newer to spending time in the countryside? This includes people who historically have been under-represented in the countryside, e.g. people from low income areas, urban areas, ethnic minority backgrounds, younger people and people with long-term health conditions.**

- not important
- slightly important
- important
- very important
- extremely important

**22. Should the Code have more emphasis on encouraging access for those with diverse physical and sensory needs?**

- yes
- no
- don't know

**23. Do you have any advice on how the Code could be improved to better reach and reflect the needs of new and under-represented groups and those with diverse physical and sensory needs?**

**24. If there are any additional activities or behaviours that should be included in the refreshed version of the Code aimed at visitors to the countryside, what are these?**

*Now we'd like to ask you about the updated version of the Code that will be aimed at land owners and land managers.*

**25. Which of the following items should be included in the refreshed version of the Code aimed at land owners and land managers? (please select all that apply)**

- legal rights for the public (Rights of Way, open access)
- ensuring accessibility, including signage
- preventing and managing trespass
- encouraging greater permissive access
- gaps, gates and stiles
- management of waste

- safety (hazards, signage (e.g. for electric fencing), storage,
- stock management, occupiers' liability)
- informal guidance (e.g. relating to routes, land management practices etc)
- other

**26. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?**

- I think the Code should be framed more in terms of positive behaviours (i.e. mainly focused on 'do's' rather than 'don'ts')
- I think the Code should be framed more around tackling problematic behaviours (i.e. flagging things we want people to stop doing)
- I think the balance of the Code at the moment between positive and negative framing is about right

**27. If you have any final comments you would like to make about Natural England's work to refresh the Countryside Code that you have not already made in the rest of the survey, please make them here.**



## Exeter City Council Survey – Parks & Greenspace Strategy

### Background information for the Devon Countryside Access Forum (Extracts from Exeter City Council documents)

January 2021

<https://exeter.gov.uk/parkspolicy/>

#### The Reason for a Parks and Greenspace strategy

Exeter City Council is seeking to update its 2005 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and will consider the following matters:

- provision, management and maintenance issues when budgets are decreasing
- look at provision matching need, especially in relation to Active and Healthy lifestyles
- link greenspaces to improve cycle and footpath networks and green corridors
- look at future demand and need in the light of population increase and housing needs
- investigate the potential for transfers of land to communities

The population of Exeter in 2018 was 130,400 with more housing planned in the next ten years. This puts pressure on greenspaces for physical and recreational activity. Such spaces offer health benefits.

The Council has 246 hectares of green space and this includes parks, playing fields, allotments, woodlands and informal green space such as pocket parks. In addition, the city's valley parks, managed by the Devon Wildlife Trust, account for a further 144 hectares. The Environment Agency, University and Forestry Commission have other land available for public access.

#### Overview

There are good levels of provision and distribution, with most people living within a 10-minute walk of a formal or informal green space. There is scope to join up smaller green spaces to form larger green corridors with active recreation and habitat benefits.

Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) suggests 0.8 Ha of formal (parks and gardens) open space for every 1000 head of population. In Exeter there is 0.26 Ha of formal greenspace, but 0.85 Ha per 1000 when formal and informal green space are counted together.

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However there remain the problems of increasing costs, and reductions in budgets. Cost-saving measures over the past ten years has reduced opportunities to find further savings. This leaves limited options to safely maintain the land and assets the council holds.

There are considerable opportunities for communities to be more involved in their local green spaces, for example by taking on minor works and improvements to such spaces.

The distribution of greenspace may appear comprehensive and evenly spread, but work remains to obtain a more realistic assessment of the actual and potential value to the community, and the city as a whole.

The Strategy is being informed by the Exeter Corporate Plan; Greater Exeter Strategic Partnership (still being developed); Liveable Exeter; National Planning Policy Framework; Planning and Local Development Framework (Exeter Local Plan); Physical Activity Strategy 2019; Play Strategy 2020; Playing Pitch Strategy 2020 and Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2020; Exeter and East Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy 2009; and Towards Carbon Neutral Exeter Report July 2019;

## Themes for the strategy

These are:

- Ensuring planning policy provides, protects and enhances green space.
- Promoting Active Design principles. This is where the development of built areas takes into account green space to support and encourage active lifestyles.
- Ensuring that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts are used to support parks and greenspace.
- Making sure the development and evolution of parks and greenspace meets the needs of everyone.
- Assess the value of parks and greenspace across the city.
- Working with other landowners as partners to make the most of green spaces.
- Take a carbon neutral approach.

## Listing of the key green spaces

### *Formal Parks and Gardens*

Belle Isle Park, Belmont Pleasure Ground, Bull Meadow Park, Bury Meadow Park, Heavitree Pleasure Ground, Northernhay Gardens, Pincus Gardens Pleasure Ground, Rougemont Gardens, Southernhay Greens, St Bartholomew's Cemetery, St Thomas Pleasure Ground, Summerway Park, Topsham Recreation Ground.

## ***Informal Local Greenspace***

These are many and varied. Examples include; Trews Weir Pocket Park, Mary Arches Pocket Park, The Mint, Topsham Pleasure Ground, Merrivale Rd Park, Digby Open Space, Vaughan Road Open Space, Dunsford Gardens, Lakeside, Haven Banks, Sandford Walk.

## ***Natural and semi natural urban greenspaces***

Valley parks, urban woodlands Higher, Exwick and Topsham cemeteries, and 7 closed churchyards

## ***Valley Parks***

The term 'Valley Parks' denotes a local planning designation covering 782ha of space in and around Exeter. Of this larger area, around 140ha of land in the Exe Valley is owned by ECC and comprises the informal public greenspaces which are managed by Devon Wildlife Trust. These are generally and collectively known as the Valley Parks. The parks (in order of approximate area size) include the following.

- Ludwell Valley Park (58ha)
- Riverside Valley Park (43ha)
- Mincinglake Valley Park (19ha)
- Barley Valley Park (Local Nature Reserve, 11ha)
- Belvidere Meadows Valley Park (Local Nature Reserve) and Duryard Valley Park (11ha)
- Whitycombe Valley Park (2ha)

In addition, there are allotments; children and young people's play space; and active sports space.

The strategy does not include highway verges; public rights of way; community gardens; Site of Importance for Nature Conservation in private ownership; churchyards; crematorium, grazing land, school grounds and university and college sports space.

## **Green Space Vision for Exeter**

Exeter will have high quality, green spaces that are safe, attractive, inclusive and accessible for all, supporting habitats, enabling active and healthy lifestyles and promoting the wellbeing of our communities.

## **Green space mapping**

Green space has been mapped and includes:

- NM1. existing information, showing what the council owns and maintains and how it is maintained and inspected.

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- NM2. privately owned greenspace. These areas are generally informal greenspace.
- NM3. catchment areas for each green space over 500m<sup>2</sup>, a ten-minute walking distance. The City is well served with few gaps in provision.
- NM4. the consultation in spring 2019. This identified key priorities: commit to maintaining and protecting green spaces; develop a clear policy on Community Asset Transfer; align with Exeter's health and well-being strategies; make biodiversity a key theme; commit to making parks and green spaces accessible to all with positive signage; and engage communities with their local green space.
- NM5. the quality, condition and standards of greenspace. This includes inspection and maintenance regimes, proportionate to the place.
- NM6. the local context, value, and accessibility of each area, and it's relevance to the nearest LSOA (area of deprivation)
- NM7. GIS mapping of barriers such as main roads, and the proximity of schools to parks

## Accessibility

- There is good distribution of publicly accessible green space across the city. Exceptions include Sowton and Marsh Barton, agricultural areas and the Valley Parks, and the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital.
- Work remains to be done to identify additional potential green space and green corridor links.
- An accessibility audit of each of the principal parks is needed.
- Some Lower Super Output Areas of deprivation in the city are amongst the most deprived in the country. Although there is generally good accessibility, other factors may adversely affect opportunities for recreation and physical activity.
- There are in addition 467 individual sites of "Doorstep" greenspaces over 500 m<sup>2</sup>

## How is the community going to be engaged?

Many tasks and skills will always be too complicated, risky or difficult for private individuals and community groups. The responsibilities and liabilities can be onerous. However, there will be many instances where there is no need for the council to be the only method of service delivery. Changes to the land use, forms of maintenance or need for equipment can be made. A partnership arrangement with others can also deliver a different outcome in a range of different ways. The traditional approaches to public greenspace management and maintenance can be challenged and changed and this can have enormous benefit. Such changes will not be easy and it is important that communities are supported to achieve this.

## Delivering the strategy

A series of Action Points have been developed. These are designed to deliver the Aims and are grouped by their Outcomes.

## What is the Council doing next?

Subject to consultation, and adoption of the strategy, action points will be developed into detailed rolling work plans to achieve these key points:

- Ensure that key gaps in provision of quality green space across the city are rectified as soon as possible. This will enable full engagement with other strategies and initiatives, such as the Tree and Woodland Strategy, Play Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Efficient and effective use of budgets and staff resources requires coherent work programmes and performance measurement, linked to existing data management systems.
- Strategic investment in basic service improvements, (such as developing and implementing a seating and litter bin programme, which gives an immediate visual uplift to a park, and often reduces maintenance costs).
- Develop and actively manage a five-year development and improvement funding plan driven by gaps in provision. This must be linked to proportionate infrastructure repairs and maintenance to reduce expensive reactive work.
- Develop skills and function-specific teams to engender pride and responsibility in the work, and increase professionalism, efficiency and standards.
- Employ skilled, trained and experienced staff to remedy the shortfall in skills, staffing levels and capability management, maintenance, inspection, safety, and systems implementation.
- Review traditional maintenance and delivery channels. Look at other specialist methods of landscape management, for example using Devon Wildlife Trust's expertise in habitat enhancement.
- People and community - boosting participation and increasing use will provide more leverage for funding. LSOAs will be prioritised.
- Develop an evaluation and review system - this will link to the asset management software.

The situation in 2020 is that the costs of maintaining the green space the council owns continues to increase, from an artificially low base, driven by staff, equipment and safety costs. Available funding continues to decrease. There remains some capacity for cost reductions by lowering standards, and/or removing some aspects of high-cost maintenance completely.

It is clear that a more radical approach is required to managing green spaces to achieve the key objectives of the council, against a background of continued and further budget reductions, and a need to find alternative funding.

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## Survey Questions

**AIMS** The draft policy sets out eight aims. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of these aims.

AIM	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A. Provide, develop and maintain safe, sustainable, equitable and inclusive greenspaces across the city for all who live and work in Exeter					
B. Plan for long term investment in green spaces					
C. Set standards to promote high quality, well maintained greenspaces with a focus on health and wellbeing					
D. Enable community participation and support to sustain, develop and enhance greenspace					
E. Work with other greenspace landowners to maximise the availability of greenspace for recreational purposes					
F. Protect green space from development and seek additional public greenspace to make up shortfalls in provision					
G. Build on existing city greenspace measures to channel, develop and enhance biodiversity and climate change mitigation					
H. Provide a network of greenspaces to safely link communities, habitats, and aid active travel with green corridors					

**Please advise what, if anything, you would change or add to these aims.**

**The draft strategy proposes numerous actions. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with these.**

**ACTIONS** The themes cover the areas of balanced provision; investment; management; quality; communities; partners; protection and planning; biodiversity; and staff and training.

ACTION	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Create and protect rich and diverse habitats and species and protect threatened species					
2. Improve biodiversity through carbon neutral approaches and reducing chemical use					
3. Use green corridors e.g. canal and riverside routes and off-road cycle/walkways to link and improve green space, communities and habitats					
4. Balance grass, herbaceous and shrub species to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change					
5. Work with communities to identify the potential to improve green space use and inclusivity					
6. Encourage volunteering, education and outreach activities					
7. Acquire additional income through e.g. landscape sponsorship, seasonal catering options and, park furniture sponsorship.					
8. Invest Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts in parks and green space					
9. Investigate options for transfer of some or all of the city parks and green space to a trust or similar body					
10. Invest in basic, high impact service improvements e.g. a seating programme					

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11. Protect and promote the horticultural heritage of Exeter (Luccombe, Pince, Veitch) by enhancing the formal parks and maintaining them to a high standard					
12. Use Active Design principles and intelligent design to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour across green space					
13. Work with landowners and partners e.g. Devon Wildlife Trust to increase access to green space for recreation and exercise					
14. Through the planning process, enhance green space, protect green space from development and ensure new houses have adequate green space					
15. Enhance staff skills, focusing on horticultural training and parks management					
16. Use technology to improve the management and maintenance of parks and green space					

**Please advise what, if anything, you would change or add to these actions?**

**Please provide any other comments or suggestions about parks and green spaces in Exeter?**



## **CONSULTATION ON THE INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN**

### **Summary for the Devon Countryside Access Forum**

(Background information extracted from the accompanying documents)

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/interimcarbonplan/>

(whole plan)

[https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DCE\\_10\\_Transport.pdf](https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DCE_10_Transport.pdf)

(transport chapter)

### **Introduction**

In May 2019, a partnership was formed to respond to the climate and ecological emergency in Devon and the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay. Members represent public bodies, private sector interests, environmental organisations and academic institutions.

The Devon Climate Emergency (DCE) partners convened a Net-Zero Task Force of fifteen volunteer specialists to steer the creation of an evidence-led Devon Carbon Plan to achieve net-zero emissions in Devon and recommend the earliest credible date for achieving net-zero emissions. Much work has been done already with different projects and the Interim Carbon Plan develops this across Devon with proposed actions to overcome challenges in achieving net-zero. Many actions will require resources to be identified and secured.

The Net-Zero Task Force has attempted to take a holistic approach in assessing how Devon can reduce its emissions across all the recognised sources of greenhouse gases (GHGs) as stated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It has attempted to consider inter-relations between actions and how these might enable or frustrate other activities, for example how the rationalisation of street lighting could save energy but discourage cycling and walking.

The Plan includes many cross-cutting themes but, for the purposes of this consultation, it is suggested the Devon Countryside Access Forum explore the Transport recommendations which fall within its remit. As well as achieving climate benefits, the proposals are likely to bring health and well-being benefits and NHS savings. Selected quotes from the Plan are included below, followed by the survey questions. There is much additional information on the link above.

# Agenda Item 12.3



## TRANSPORT

*Reducing transport need, switching to shared and human powered transport*

Transport accounts for 31% of Devon's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The sector is the single largest emitter of GHG across the County, which also reflects the UK-wide position.

Reducing emissions from transport is key to successfully reaching net-zero. Addressing the challenge will require a combination of behavioural, policy and technological changes. The movement of people, as opposed to goods, accounts for around two thirds of all transport emissions. Whilst all areas of transport must decarbonise, and do so rapidly, transforming how we move about Devon will provide the opportunity to realise significant wider benefits: for our health, safety, public and personal finances and enjoyment of public space.

## REDUCE THE NEED TO TRAVEL

We must better consider our spatial planning and land use to reduce the need for travel and increase the ease, attractiveness and safety of active travel. Rural villages and towns have too often become locked into having to travel to access amenities and services, as well as employment. Successive planning policies and regimes have resulted in a loss of amenities and services from rural communities, furthering the need for travel. Creating thriving and more self-reliant rural communities through a relocalisation of services is important to address the drivers of travel. However, when communities want and need to go further afield, they need access to sustainable travel and transport.

## MODAL-SHIFT TO SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

We need to encourage the use of sustainable transport by making it the most attractive choice, particularly in urban areas. There are challenges to shifting rural transport to sustainable modes, particularly due to Devon's dispersed geography and the need to access larger settlements for services. Further consideration will be needed on how best to deliver active travel opportunities for rural communities and improved public transport and shared mobility facilities for less densely populated parts of Devon viably. This is especially important given that Devon welcomes significant numbers of tourists annually to enjoy our countryside.

## THE ACTIONS:

### TRAVEL ADVICE

- **T1.** Provide up-to-date digital information and advice on reducing the need to travel and the most sustainable travel choice. Examples could include workplace and school travel planning.



## CYCLING AND WALKING ACTIONS

- **T6.** Develop local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) with communities for each city, town and their surrounding areas.
- **T7.** Improve strategic cycle routes between and within settlements.
- **T8.** Greater provision of cycle training, including bike maintenance and repair
- **T9.** Where possible, design pavements and junctions to prioritise pedestrian and cyclists over vehicular traffic.
- **T10** Enable schemes that would allow residents to trial different types of cycles.
- **T11.** Introduce reduced speed limits for safer public spaces.
- **T12.** Provide support for bike rental schemes
- **T13.** Local Plans to ensure new developments are designed with filtered permeability to promote sustainable travel
- **T14.** Implement car-free days in Devon's urban areas

Devon's residents and visitors can be unsure of the options for travel around the County and often lack confidence walking and cycling due to concerns around safety.

Our settlements and roads frequently feel vehicle-dominated, with streets often dominated by private car use. Whilst there has been a more recent realisation of the need for dedicated space for walking and cycling, the majority of our urban areas lack fully segregated facilities, thus deterring active travel. The Committee on Climate Change assumes that 10% of car journeys, by distance rather than by trip, need to be shifted to walking and cycling in order to achieve net-zero by 2050.

# Agenda Item 12.3



The Transport section of the Interim Carbon Plan highlighted key anticipated outcomes.  
Please indicate whether your support these outcomes.

1.

Outcome:	I do not support this outcome	I support this outcome	Unsure
1. Relocalisation of services and technology and to reduce the need to travel.			
2. Access to village, town and city centres is enhanced for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.			
3. All benefit from the relocalisation of facilities and services, including the local economy, particularly small businesses.			
4. We are all feeling fitter and healthier from being more active outdoors.			
5. Wider environmental benefits, including reduced pollution and improved biodiversity.			
6. Ultra-low emission vehicles are used for travel in rural areas and between rural and urban areas where the distances are prohibitive for active travel and existing commercial models for public transport are not viable.			
7. A great proportion of people travelling by sustainable modes of transport.			

2. If you do not support one or more outcomes, please tell us why in the text box below.



The priority actions to achieve these outcomes are outlined below.

Please indicate whether you agree with these actions:

3.

Action:	I do not support this action	I support this action	Unsure
a) Provide up-to-date digital information and advice on reducing the need to travel and the most sustainable travel choice.			
b) Review opportunities to reduce vehicle capacity, particularly where it can support other objectives (i.e. urban centre regeneration, street cafes, active travel routes).			
c) Promote development which will assist in relocalisation in all settings (rural through to urban), including mixed use development, development meeting local needs and creating opportunities to live, work and use services locally.			
d) Improve strategic cycle routes within and between settlements.			
e) Ensure provision of mobility hubs in new developments of appropriate size, where modal change can occur easily.			
f) Promote Total Transport, integrating various transport services (school transport, public bus services, patient transport etc.) to enable more efficient use of vehicles and reduce dead mileage.			
g) Enhancement of bus priority measures, including bus lanes and bus-only streets, to make bus travel relatively more attractive than driving.			
h) Protect and seek to enhance funding for local bus routes, to ensure people can continue to access services, employment and events without requiring access to a car.			
i) Through the Peninsula Sub-National Body work with government to pilot and implement a low carbon fuel solution for rail travel in the South West.			

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4. If you do not support one or more actions, please tell us why in the text box below.

## Desired outcomes from Transport:

- Relocalisation of services and technology and to reduce the need to travel.
- Access to village, town and city centres is enhanced for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- All benefit from the relocalisation of facilities and services, including the local economy, particularly small businesses.
- We are all feeling fitter and healthier from being more active outdoors.
- Wider environmental benefits, including reduced pollution and improved biodiversity.
- Ultra-low emission vehicles are used for travel in rural areas and between rural and urban areas where the distances are prohibitive for active travel and existing commercial models for public transport are not viable.
- A great proportion of people travelling by sustainable modes of transport.

The plan has identified a series of actions for achieving these outcomes.

**5. Please rate the actions from very high importance to not at all important. (Only actions relevant to the Devon Countryside Access Forum's remit are included in the list below. Other actions related to buses, taxis, freight, aviation, electric vehicles and charging and other aspects are excluded).**

If you think an action is too controversial to implement and should instead be discussed at the Citizens' Assembly by a representative sample of Devon's residents, please indicate this in the right-hand column.



Action:	Not at all important	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Very high importance	This issue needs to be discussed by the Citizens' Assembly.
A. Provide up-to-date digital information and advice on reducing the need to travel and the most sustainable travel choice						
B. Promote development which will assist in relocalisation in all settings (rural through to urban), including mixed use development, development meeting local needs and creating opportunities to live, work and use services locally.						
C. Continue to make use of funding opportunities to provide employment and community assets across Devon, particularly where the market is unlikely to provide this, in order to minimise the need to travel for access to services.						
D. Ensure that the carbon implications are considered when making efficiency savings to community services						
E. Review opportunities to reduce vehicle capacity, particularly where it can support other objectives (i.e. urban centre regeneration, street cafes, active travel routes.)						
F. Develop local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) with communities for each city, town and their surrounding areas.						
G. Improve strategic cycle routes within and between settlements.						
H. Greater provision of cycle training, including bike maintenance and repair						
I. Where possible, design pavements and junctions to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic.						

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J. Enable schemes that would allow residents to trial different types of cycles. Introduce reduced speed limits for safer shared public space.						
K. Provide support for bike rental schemes						
L. Local Plans to ensure new developments are designed with filtered permeability to promote sustainable travel						
M. Help develop innovative transport solutions in rural areas						
N. Protect and seek to enhance funding for financially supported local bus routes, to ensure people can continue to access services, employment and events without requiring access to a car.						
O. Through the Peninsula Sub-National Transport Body, work with government to improve strategic and branch line rail infrastructure and services, including reviewing the reopening of lines and increasing access to rail and integration with other modes of transport. Work with government for required funding.						
P. Take advantage of opportunities arising from the upcoming National Bus Strategy to deliver long-term, sustained improvements in bus services						
Q. Greater provision of cycle parking across Devon and at key interchange locations						
R. Ensure provision of mobility hubs in new developments of appropriate size, where modal change can occur easily.						
S. Ensure public transport enables easy transition to active travel for the first and last mile.						
T. Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans to demonstrate how they will shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to facilitate the achievement of Net-Zero in Devon, as a primary planning objective. This must include the requirement for new development to provide credible plans for it to contribute to Devon's net-zero carbon future.						



**6. Are there any actions that you think are important to reduce carbon emissions in this sector that the plan has not covered?**

- 1.  No
- 2.  Yes

If you answered 'yes' please add any additional information in the text box below. Please explain why you believe each additional action is important.

**7. Should any of these additional actions be discussed at the Citizens' Assembly?**

- 1.  Yes
- 2.  No

If you answered 'yes' please detail which actions in the text box below.

**8. Do you have any additional comments you would like to be considered on this section's actions?**

- 1.  Yes
- 2.  No

If you answered 'yes' please detail which actions in the text box below.

# Agenda Item 12.3



## Implementing the Plan:

**9. If you are an individual or community organisation, are you aware of any community projects / schemes linked to one or more of the actions highlighted in the plan? Please provide details of websites, social media or contact details where possible.**

1.  Yes

2.  No

If you answered yes please add any additional information or queries in the text box below.

## Governance

**10. If you represent a business or an organisation, would a representative from your organisation or business see value in getting involved?**

1.  Yes

2.  No

Please use the text box below to explain your answer.

If you answered yes please ensure you sign up to the Devon Climate Emergency newsletter mailing list ([www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/join/](http://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/join/)). Here we share news about the future governance structure and how you might be able to get involved.