



Devon Countryside Access Forum

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Exeter City Council
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Dear Sir/Madam

Emerging Exeter Vision for 2040

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 councils.

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 Vision for Exeter aspires to increase physical activity levels and states that transport will not be a barrier to economic or social activities. The DCAF welcomes this aspiration and the associated benefits to health and wellbeing. With this in mind, the DCAF advises that the Vision for Exeter should not operate in isolation. The developing Vision should indicate how the city and its residents interact with the immediate surroundings and how the council will work with adjoining authorities to achieve the aims of improved health and reduced congestion that are set out in the document.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum met on 9 October and discussed a recent training day held at Haldon Forest Park. One of the items discussed was the lack of public transport for people wishing to access Haldon.

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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As one example, Haldon Forest Park offers an incredible outdoor resource but, due to topography, is somewhat isolated from the city. Those on low incomes or without transport and teenagers are less able to access Haldon, despite it being on the fringe of the city. The Forum advises that the Council should explore public or community transport initiatives (that also allow transport of bicycles) to make this area, and other greenspaces within and close to the City, more accessible.

Those living with disabilities are likely to find it more difficult to access greenspace. The Forum advises that the detail for a Vision for Exeter should be innovative in the use of public transport to encourage healthy lifestyles. Public transport should encourage and facilitate use by those with disabilities, for example by having space for wheelchairs and small mobility scooters. The Office for National Statistics 2011 ward data for Exeter shows that 9,006 people had long term health problems or disabilities which limited day to day activities a lot.

The City Council is advised to work with the University of Exeter and Exeter College to discuss how students, most without cars, can be encouraged to access greenspace and what innovative projects and sustainable transport solutions might assist.

Yours faithfully



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum

Chair: Sarah Slade Vice Chair: Chris Cole