



Devon Countryside Access Forum

Lucombe House
County Hall
Topsham Road
EXETER EX2 4QD

Tel: 07837 171000
01392 382771

devoncaf@devon.gov.uk

www.devon.gov.uk/dcaf

The Cranbrook Plan
Planning Policy
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
Border Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate
Honiton
EX14 1EJ

18 April 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Cranbrook Plan Submission Draft

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, one of which is district councils.

The DCAF currently has sixteen 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 Forum meeting on 25 April 2019.

The DCAF has previously prepared position statements on Planning and Major Developments, Disability Access and Greenspace and these are attached.

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

supported by
Devon
County Council

General comments on sustainable transport and green space.

The DCAF recognises the importance of health and well-being and the contribution that well-designed and safe walking and cycling routes can make. Ensuring the provision of accessible green space with dedicated cycling and walking routes through such areas is also valuable and will help to encourage sustainable transport.

CB15 Delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS)

The policy on SANGS would be more *sound (effective)* if the following matters were considered.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would welcome much more information as to how SANGS will be provided, and financed, in perpetuity. There is no firm indication of how that will work or what level of maintenance would be considered adequate. Significant environmental change over coming decades, for example climate change and tree disease, may mean additional contingency funds need to be provided to deal with such problems. Ongoing maintenance costs are generally under-estimated and under-provided for on such projects. To ensure the SANGS site achieves its objectives, and is well used by Cranbrook residents, it needs to be well-maintained with sufficient long-term funding.

The SANGS policy has a number of 'delivery' points. No mention is made of access using public transport and there is an emphasis on car use/parking. The Plan should explicitly recognise that some users need safe access that is separate from car access, and that intended routes, e.g. a cycle path within a road, may either be unsuitable for children to use independently, or may fail if it is interrupted by a hazard like a busy junction or a difficult road to cross. If children/young people (and other non-car drivers) are to be properly provided for, means of accessing the SANGS safely and independently should be explored and explicitly set out, recognising and dealing with such potential obstacles. This is particularly important as Cranbrook is likely to have an above average proportion of children and young people.

The DCAF welcomes inclusion in the SANGS policy of the provision of circular paths that are available all year round, appropriate signing and a variety of habitats.

As dog walkers are the main access user group, areas to walk dogs off-lead are particularly appreciated by dog owners. Whilst the principle of SANGS is to provide space for dog-walking away from environmentally sensitive areas, some SANGS sites in the country do provide wider paths to allow for cycling and the DCAF advises that this should be explored.

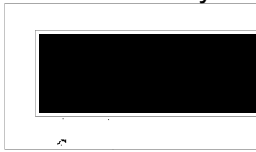
Ensuring easy access into the SANGS site for people with pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters is also critically important. The Devon Countryside Access Forum's Disability Access Position Statement provides further detail.

Housing design

In a recent response to the Department of Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy consultation, the Forum highlighted the poor storage facilities associated with new housing which can discourage bike ownership.

The Forum would welcome feedback on its comments.

Yours faithfully



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of Devon Countryside Access Forum

Chair: Sarah Slade Vice Chair: Chris Cole