



**Devon Countryside Access Forum
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Planning Policy
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House
Border Road,
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EX14 1EJ

13 January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

East Devon draft Local Plan consultation

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 district councils.

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

This response has been agreed by the Forum and will be on the agenda for formal approval at its next meeting on 31 January. These comments are along the lines of advice submitted to other consultations.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is submitting two of its agreed position statements on Greenspace and Planning and advises that these should be taken into

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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account in developing the East Devon Local Plan. The Forum welcomes the emphasis on green infrastructure included in the draft Plan.

In addition, the following specific advisory comments have been agreed.

Item	Statement in Plan	Comments
Local Plan Vision (p.11) (Second of the three priorities)	A Greener East Devon, which prioritises issues arising from climate change and supports our natural environment.	This priority statement should be expanded as follows – , including access to the natural environment.'
Clyst Valley Regional Park (p.58 & 59)	<p>16. Strategic Policy – Green infrastructure and the Clyst Valley Regional Park</p> <p>Objective</p> <p>e) Promote cycling and walking opportunities to link habitats and sustainable movement networks that promote the overall recreational experience.</p> <p>g) To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn outside the classroom.</p>	<p>The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that additional statements should be added to the following clauses to strengthen them.</p> <p>e) Promote cycling and walking opportunities to link habitats and sustainable movement networks that promote the overall experience for recreational users, for travel to work and to school.</p> <p>g) To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn outside the classroom and increase their understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment.</p> <p><i>An extra clause should be added to the effect that funding (including s106 money) should be secured to fund a ranger post, or training for volunteers, to encourage people to use the Park and enjoy it in a responsible manner.</i></p>
Walking, cycling and public transport (p.229)	65. Strategic Policy – Walking, Cycling and Public Transport “Walking and cycling links should be prioritised in new development – such links should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. Cycle paths should be segregated from pedestrians to reduce the potential for conflict.	This statement should be expanded to be clearer. The DCAF recognises that planned, dedicated cycle paths can facilitate and encourage cycling and sustainable transport, enabling cyclists to travel more quickly. However, the associated pedestrian routes should be accessible for all and clear of obstacles as mobility

		<p>scooters and powered wheelchairs are not legally permitted to use cycle routes, despite the benefits that using a well-surfaced cycle route would provide. Where there are multi-use trails, including bridleways, that are not segregated, “share this space” should be the preferred strategy for the management of these. Pedestrians, horse-riders, cyclists, dog walkers and people with mobility scooters should be encouraged to recognise their shared responsibilities to other trail users.</p>
SANGS (p.262)	13.24. SANGS will need to include substantial open space areas ideally of semi-natural character and should specifically be appealing to dog walkers.	<p>The Forum advises that the statement on SANGS should recognise other needs and not just those of dog walkers.</p> <p>13.24. SANGS will need to include substantial open space areas ideally of semi-natural character and should specifically be appealing to young families and those with limited access to other nearby natural open space, and also to dog walkers.</p>
Omission from the Plan	Public Rights of Way	<p>The Plan as a whole makes scant reference to public rights of way. The Devon Countryside Access Forum advises that developments should seek to link new cycling and walking routes to existing public rights of way and trails, and enhancing these where appropriate. This would maximise the potential recreational and sustainable transport impact. This is particularly pertinent with the proposal for a new town as there will be a need to take account of the impact on existing PRow and access, the need for integrated green spaces and also links to the regional park.</p>

This response constitutes formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum and feedback on its comments would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully



Hilary Winter
Forum Officer

Letter sent on behalf of the Devon Countryside Access Forum

Chair: Sarah Slade

Vice Chair: Chris Cole