



**Devon Countryside Access Forum  
c/o Public Rights of Way team  
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Ms Angela King MRTPI  
Planning Policy team  
East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House  
Border Road  
Heathpark Industrial Estate,  
Honiton  
EX14 1EJ

24 June 2024

Dear Ms King

### **East Devon Local Plan Further (Regulation 18) Consultation**

The Devon Countryside Access Forum would like to make the following comments on the above consultation. These will be formally approved at its next meeting on 23 September.

#### **Clyst Valley Regional Park**

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 areas. The overarching intention and initiatives are worthy of strong support and will potentially lead to biodiversity and other benefits.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes that the list of sites suggests that they will all provide A: Active and Healthy Places. The DCAF continues to 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. The concept of a regional park, and where land is accessible, needs to be clearly understood.

As the Devon Countryside Access Forum has previously mentioned, the future maintenance of both accessible 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,

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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surfacing and other access scheme elements within flood plain areas (a significant percentage 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.

The Devon Countryside Access Forum has developed a position statement on Greenspace and this is attached.

## **Coastal Preservation Area**

### **Policy - Coastal Preservation Areas**

*Land around the coast and estuaries of East Devon, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as a Coastal Preservation Area. The Coastal Preservation Area is defined on the basis of visual openness and views to and from the sea.*

*Development or any change of use will not be allowed if it would damage the undeveloped/open status of the designated area or where visually connected to any adjoining areas.*

*Appropriate proposals which increase public access to the coast will be supported.*

The DCAF supports this policy and recognises the importance of the visual openness and views to and from the sea for recreational access and enjoyment of public rights of way and the coast path. In line with previous advice, the DCAF would support appropriate proposals which increase public access to the coast, particularly between Lyme Regis and Seaton (Area 1) where access from inland to the South West Coast Path / King Charles III England Coast Path is extremely poor.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum. East Devon District Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this Forum in carrying out its functions. Feedback on its comments would therefore be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Winter  
Forum Officer

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

*Chair: Sarah Slade. Vice Chair: Chris Cole.*

The Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF) is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its statutory remit is to give independent advice “as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area...” Section 94(4) of the Act specifies bodies to whom the Forum has a statutory function to give advice, and this includes county and 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.