



**Devon Countryside Access Forum
c/o Public Rights of Way team
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Mr D Phillips
Planning Development Management
Climate Change, Environment & Transport
Devon County Council
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter EX2 4QD

7 August 2024

Dear Mr Phillips

Creation of new cycle and pedestrian path – Sidford to Sidbury DCC/4404/2024

The Devon Countryside Access Forum notes the planning application for the Sidford to Sidbury cycle/walking route on which there was a pre-application consultation. The Forum is disappointed to note that its advice on the route has not been taken into account and is resubmitting its previous comments. This response will be on the agenda for formal approval at the next meeting of the Forum on 23 September.

The Forum notes that the surface will be tarmac and advises that all steps should be taken to minimise the impact on the landscape.

Although some low-level lighting has been discounted due to the likely impact on nocturnal wildlife, the Forum advises there should be a commitment to investigate whether different forms of lighting might make the path more accessible after dark, without adversely impacting wildlife. Your attention is drawn to documents on lighting published by the Malvern Hills National Landscape [MHAONB-Guidance-on-Lighting-final.pdf \(malvernhillsaonb.org.uk\)](https://malvernhillsaonb.org.uk) and the Blackdown Hills National Landscape blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/blackdown-hills-good-lighting-guide.pdf, and the latest guidance note on bats and lighting published in 2023 by the Institute of Lighting Professionals and the Bat Conservation Trust. [Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](https://theilp.org.uk)

It is noted that the planning application does not include or seek to resolve the use of Hillside and the evident safety concerns for cyclists and walkers. If improvements are required to make this scheme safe and acceptable within planning terms and could be achieved under permitted development regulations, then perhaps the undertaking of those works could be made a condition of any planning consent given. As stated in the earlier letter, a route west along the back of the gardens of Hillside continuing along the field boundary, as indicated in the Phase 2 indicative alignment, might overcome these issues. Connecting the route in its entirety to Sidbury would appear essential to realise the full benefits from the initial Phase 1 investment.

These comments constitute formal advice from the Devon Countryside Access Forum and Devon County 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 would be 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 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.