

Greater Exeter Strategic Plan Consultation: Issues

Joint East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council document. This formal statutory document will provide the overall spatial strategy and level of housing and employment land to be provided up to 2040. Please visit www.gesp.org.uk for more information.

Engagement with stakeholders and communities will be critical to the success of the Plan. At this first stage, the authorities are consulting on an initial 'issues document' which, after setting out some background information, looks to explain the scope and content of the plan as well as describing the key issues facing the Greater Exeter area. Consultation on a more detailed Plan will follow.

Response submitted on the electronic response form 07.04.17

The Devon Countryside Access Forum is a local access forum under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Its remit is to advise "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..." It has a statutory function to give independent advice to named bodies under section 94 of the CRoW Act, including borough and district councils, and they are required to "have regard" to "any relevant advice" given to them.

The DCAF currently has sixteen members who represent the interests of landowners/ managers, access users and other relevant areas of expertise such as conservation and tourism.

The timing of this consultation did not coincide with a meeting of the Forum. This agreed response will be on the agenda for formal ratification at the next meeting on 27 April. The comments in this response reflect advice previously provided by the DCAF.

The Forum has prepared a position statement on planning and this is attached. Given the anticipated level of development in the Greater Exeter area, the DCAF advises that provision of amenity land and sustainable transport links are vitally important. Based on that premise an additional issue should be added stressing the importance of good green infrastructure (green space, public rights of way, multi-use trails, forestry etc.) to link rural and urban communities and to be incorporated within developments. Such provision would be in line with evidence from other bodies, such as Natural England and Sport England, which stress the health and well-being benefits arising from nearby greenspace which people can reach without cars. This is a cross-cutting issue which has not been fully highlighted in the initial ideas. These green areas should include specific areas for dog walking and dog free space in line with the publication Planning for Dog Ownership in New Developments: Reducing Conflict – Adding Value <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/ccbs/countryside/planningfordogownership.pdf>

Although the ageing population is mentioned as an area of concern under the health issue it does not mention obesity and the importance of getting all ages out exercising. Access for those with limited mobility should be included as part of planning for specific health requirements.