



Devon Countryside Access Forum

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POSITION STATEMENT ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

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The Devon Countryside Access Forum recognises that not all these points will necessarily fall within the remit of the authority in all instances. However, where the authority is exercising its function as a planning authority, or is developing strategic principles and policies, the DCAF advises that these considerations are taken into account.

Functional walking and cycling

The DCAF advises that the district council should;

- maximise opportunities for walking and cycling within villages and towns. This would accord with the Government health agenda and sustainability proposals embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework;
- identify strategic walking and cycling routes within settlements and ensure these link to surrounding rural areas and the rights of way network;
- ensure new development proposals include safe and high quality provision for cycling and walking routes linking housing to schools, shops, employment areas and recreational and sports facilities;
- seek to develop circular routes within settlements to encourage healthier lifestyles and minimise car use;
- encourage opportunities to develop, facilitate and promote the National Cycle Network and its integration with other forms of transport;
- give adequate consideration to the requirements of those with mobility needs in the design of new walking and cycling routes, and in the improvement of existing routes.

Rights of Way

The DCAF advises that the district council should;

- recognise the rights of way network and its contribution to health, tourism and sustainability;
- protect the rights of way network from development proposals;
- ensure new housing developments link to the rights of way network, where appropriate;
- seek to improve the safety for rights of way users where routes meet or run along roads;

- explore integration of transport links with rights of way, particularly strategic long distance routes;
- recognise other routes, such as unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads, and their contribution to recreational opportunities.

New recreational access routes

The DCAF advises that the district council should:

- ensure liaison and consultation takes place with landowners and land managers at the earliest opportunity when new routes are being explored, and prior to any routes being included in policy documents;
- consult the local community;
- seek to create a network of circular routes around settlements to increase usage;
- seek opportunities to expand provision through any relevant grants and other funding mechanisms;
- explore opportunities for locally important or strategic routes along former railway lines and canals;
- ensure that, wherever possible, new routes are multi-use in accordance with Devon County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan policies.

Other recreational space

The DCAF advises that the district council should;

- identify access land (open country and registered Common Land) and highlight the opportunities this affords for recreation;
- draw attention to permissive access opportunities, for example on farmland, in Forestry Commission woodlands and elsewhere;
- recognise the importance of green space, green linkages, playing fields and other similar areas and protect these from development;
- map and indicate legal uses of green space areas within the plan area;
- seek to develop green recreational areas within new housing and employment sites.

Up-to-date statistical information on a range of issues to support these statements is available.