

Sent to: East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Torridge District Council, West Devon Borough Council

Mrs A Cooper
Principal Planner (Policy and Strategy)
Policy and Heritage Section
Teignbridge District Council
Forde House
NEWTON ABBOT
TQ12 4XX

27 May 2005

Dear Mrs Cooper

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

You may recall a letter from our Chairman, Mr Harvey, to Mr Davis on 30 March 2005. Just to recap, the Devon Local Access Forum is a statutory advisory body established by Devon County Council under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Its role is to advise the appointing authority on public enjoyment of the countryside. The Devon Local Access Forum covers the whole of Devon, with the exception of the national parks and unitary authorities which have their own forums.

Since its formation the LAF has been actively involved in advising the County Council on many access issues, particularly access to open country and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Devon LAF is aware of the Local Development Framework process and would like to ensure access issues do feature in the deliberations and planning involved in this process.

Having discussed a range of access issues over the past year, the LAF would like the following access issues to be considered by the Authority in its core strategy or generic development control policy.

Protection of access

The spatial planning requirements for the LDF bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land. These policies provide an opportunity for the Authority to protect and develop access for local residents.

On occasions new development has been permitted which has affected a right of way to the detriment of the enjoyment, health and welfare of inhabitants.

Strategic access

The Local Access Forum would encourage the Authority to take a strategic view of access, particularly in relation to new housing and industrial development. Access links could benefit many developments for reasons of health, safety, air quality and sustainability – all important Government priorities.

Incorporation with wider policies

The Local Access Forum has been closely involved with the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its vision for access improvements. The LAF hopes that this document and its action priorities, in addition to other policies, will inform the core strategy.

Priority areas

The LAF is aware of parishes and areas of towns where the rights of way network is poor. The Authority might like to consider whether there are particular areas for access improvement which could be considered within any area action plan.

Proactive work

Lack of circular walks and open green space are problems frequently cited by Devon residents. The LAF would encourage the Authority to develop linkages to other parts of the rights of way network and give proactive consideration to open green space in village and town environments, engaging the local community in the process.

Consultation

The Devon LAF is aware of instances where insufficient local consultation has either caused problems with rights of way, or has failed to produce an outcome optimising access use. Consultation processes for access issues involving local people, access users and landowners would be beneficial.

I should be grateful if you could let me know what stage the Local Development Framework has reached and when it will be discussed. It would be useful if you could inform me of Council meetings when the framework is on the agenda.

If you would like further information or input at this stage please do not hesitate to contact me. I enclose a copy of our Annual Report for interest.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Winter
Secretary