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Our ref:
Your ref:

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24 March 2011

Dear Liz,

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY - INITIAL CONSULTATION

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mid Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy - Initial Consultation.

The Highways Agency supports the objectives identified in the document, in particular those that align with Government Transport Policy to encourage alternatives to current road use in accommodating growth. Of particular relevance in this regard is Objective 3, specifically the need to adapt to and mitigate climate change by influencing the design of new development to reduce carbon emissions by providing and enhancing green alternatives to unsustainable modes of travel. Provision of such alternatives will contribute to the national legal requirement of a 34% reduction on 1990 carbon emission levels by 2020 and are therefore fully supported by the Agency.

We would like to see a further bullet point within Objective 1 encouraging sustainable transport by providing improved bicycle and pedestrian access between residential, employment and commercial areas.

With regard to Objective 2, as you will be aware, the promotion of healthy lifestyles is a priority for both the Department for Health and for the Department for Transport, and therefore objectives here are very much welcomed. For the Agency, proposals that attract people away from the car are not only beneficial in terms of health but are also likely to have a positive impact upon the operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN). We also support the objective to improve air quality in urban and rural areas and we will continue to work closely with the Council on Air Quality Management Areas affected by the SRN.

With regard to Objective 4, these aims therein correspond closely with the Highways Agency's own biodiversity objectives for the SRN. The Highways Agency manages a significant area of biodiversity habitat in the form of soft estate adjacent to the SRN. This linear resource may potentially be of relevance to the GIS objective to improve

linkages and connectivity between habitats and therefore this aim in particular would be supported by the Agency.

Summary

In summary, the objectives of the GIS generally align with many of the Highways Agency's aims, particularly those which reflect the national priorities for promoting sustainable growth, adapting to climate change, reducing carbon emissions, improving health and wellbeing, quality of life and protecting and enhancing biodiversity resources.

The Agency supports the allocation of sites for development that will assist in the sustainable growth of the main towns in the district and maintain the function of the surrounding rural settlements. They should be accessible by public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes and not be reliant on private car travel.

It is important that a transport evidence base is provided to detail the potential impact of the individual sites on the SRN and to identify the mitigating measures that may be required to support their development.

We welcome the opportunity to make comment on this consultation document and look forward to further involvement in the production of the Mid Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy. If in the meantime you would like to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01392 312502.

Yours sincerely



Steve Hellier

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cc Simon Murray, Halcrow