Natural Devon
Devon Local Nature Partnership

Improving Engagement with Our Natural Environment

Naturally Healthy

Behaviour Change Scoping Report

July 2014

Public Health in Devon
Committed to promoting health equality

Naturally Healthy

Patsy Temple, Public Health Specialist

Lara Snowdon, Advanced Public Health Practitioner

Ruth Dale, Public Health Programme Manager - Social Marketing

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FOREWORD

Natural Devon

Devon is a beautiful county and offers a fantastic range of opportunities to visit natural spaces, whether it is the beach, the moors or the local park. Taking advantage of these natural assets and living in harmony with them is an important part of securing good health and wellbeing for Devon's population.

Over the last decade, evidence which demonstrates the importance of the natural environment to our health and wellbeing has been rapidly mounting. This evidence supports what we seem to know anecdotally – that getting out on the moors is rejuvenating, that going for a stroll in a sunny park is relaxing, or that heading for the coast is a good way to escape from our busy lives.

Devon LNP Map
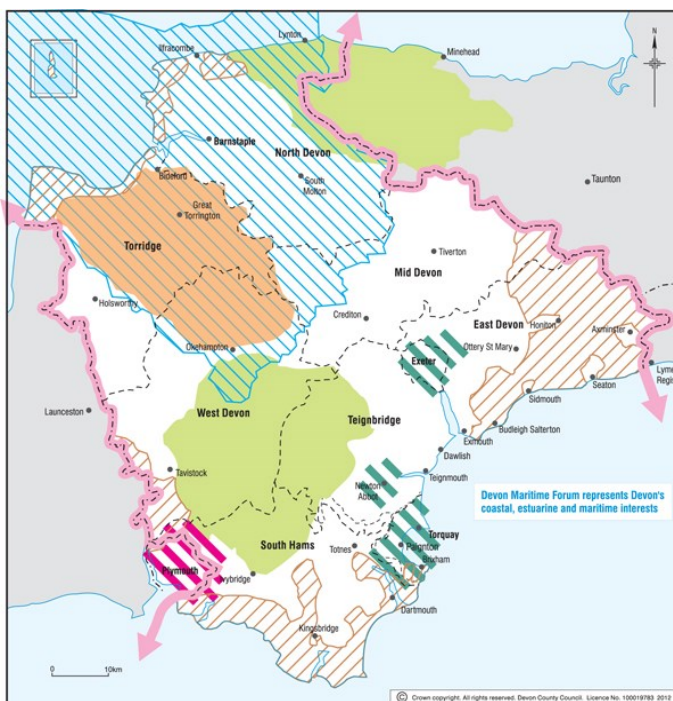
Whilst there are many people in Devon who take full advantage of the opportunities offered to us by our beautiful county, we also know that there are a large number of people who do not make use of our natural heritage. Further to this, access to the natural environment seems to be mediated by socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, disability, and health status.

To take forward the Local Nature Partnership's Naturally Healthy agenda it is important to ensure that everyone in Devon has the confidence and the ability to enjoy our natural environment.

Public Health in Devon

Since April 2013, local authorities have been integrated into the new public health system, with the recognition that the services they provide make an important contribution to the protection and improvement of the health of local populations. Working towards securing Devon's natural health benefits is an important part of Public Health's role in the Local Authority.

This report has been written by Public Health Devon on behalf of the Devon Local Nature Partnership (LNP). The Devon LNP is an umbrella organisation that brings together and includes everyone with an interest in protecting and securing the benefits of the natural environment. The Devon LNP Prospectus (2014-19) makes a clear commitment to championing Devon's natural environment as a way of promoting health equality and improving health.

This report provides a practicable resource for those in Devon who are interested in encouraging people to secure the health benefits of the natural environment, and ensure that it is a valued resource for the health of future generations.

Dr Virginia Pearson
Director of Public Health
Devon County Council

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RATIONALE FOR WORK

The Evidence Base

The literature review detailed in this report establishes strong evidence that the natural environment is good for our mental and physical health and can deliver positive changes to health at a population level.

This effect is primarily mediated by being physically active at various levels of intensity in the natural environment. Data indicates that those who access the natural environment are more likely to be physically active than those who do not.

We have worked on the assumption that if we can increase both the number and the diversity of those accessing the natural environment, participants physical activity levels will also be improved. This in turn will deliver mental and physical health benefits that have the potential to impact health at a population level.

Behaviour Change Scoping Report

This report pulls out the insights from national evidence, local experts and stakeholders and local qualitative research. These insights are to inform the planning and delivery of opportunities to access the natural environment across Devon. This will help us to achieve the Natural Devon aim to: "ensure that everyone in Devon has the opportunity and the confidence to be 'naturally healthy' in order to improve their health and wellbeing".

We will use the public health outcome framework indicator 1.16 - % of people using outdoor space for exercise/health reasons to monitor the impact of this work. This outcome uses the MENE data (Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment) collated by Natural England.

We will also use the MENE indicator relating to access to and use of green spaces to monitor progress of this 'Naturally Healthy' objective.

"Ensure that everyone in Devon has the opportunity and the confidence to be 'naturally healthy' in order to improve their health and wellbeing."

SUMMARY

Lessons for Practitioners

Insights

The insight identified by this scoping review should inform planning and delivery of services, activities and communications which seek to increase access to natural spaces for people in lower-income groups. Strategically it should be acknowledged that access will only be improved by understanding the barriers that people face.

The overarching insight from this research is that research participants had a genuine desire to increase their access to the natural environment:

> "People have a good attitude and want to access green space more often. The main barriers are know how and confidence" (Transform Research 2014; annex a).

Barriers & Motivators

The following checklist is designed as an aide memoire for planners and service providers to ensure that insight from this report is maximised, and permeates through from policy to person. This checklist is presented through the marketing framework of the four 'P's:

Price, Product, Place, Promotion.

Of particular note is the extent to which lack of car ownership is both a barrier in itself, and acts to exacerbate other common barriers, such as lack of time, lack of funds, and fear of exposure with no shelter.

⇒ ### Price - "the cost of access"

- Costs of access are not just £'s but can be fear of exposure and lack of shelter, lack of equipment, lack of time, lack of confidence.

⇒ ### Product - "activities within green spaces"

- Structured activities that increase confidence were highlighted as examples of good practice.
- Health is a motivator but more so is seeing animals and a sense of achieving something.

- The desire to increase access should be created when communicating about a service or activity.
- The narrative can assume prior experience of the green spaces such as happy childhood memories.

⇒ ### Place - "woodlands, parks, moors"

- Woodlands are associated with exploring and climbing and adventures.
- Parks are associated with children playing, dogs, sport and play equipment.
- Public transport and shelter should be carefully considered in service design.

⇒ ### Promotion - "using the correct language"

- When there are low costs involved and no/ little equipment requirements - this should be emphasised. It shouldn't be assumed that not mentioning something will communicate it is not needed. Low confidence can mean the reader will err to the opposite, and assume that it is not for them.
- If there is shelter and toilets, say so.
- Use trusted sources and testimonials.
- The words physical activity, paths and natural environment are not as positive as green space, woodland, fun and social.

⇒ ### Evaluation

- Set clear SMART objectives- "specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound," that focus on the desired behaviour change as well as numbers and targets.
- Capture people's experiences pre and post intervention as well as quantitative data.
- Be independent, where possible have someone else evaluate your service.
- Refer to NICE Guidance on behaviour change.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report lays out the findings from the social marketing scoping review. The objective of this report is to triangulate the evidence from three main sources:

1. The national and international literature

2. Local experts

3. Local research

The intelligence collated from these sources, collectively generates insight into why people in Devon do access/ do not access the natural environment, and how interventions might work to either maintain or change people's behaviour.

Value of Nature for Health: The Evidence

As part of this scoping process, a review of the national and international literature was undertaken. Areas of research included:

- The relationship between health and the natural environment;

- Perceptions of the natural environment;

- Barriers to use.

Local Stakeholders

This scoping review is undertaken on behalf of the Naturally Healthy Task and Finish Group of the Devon LNP. Members of the Naturally Healthy Group have been key informants throughout this process, as experts in engaging the public with the natural environment.

The review also uses insight from 'expert' stakeholder interviews and a county-wide survey which sought to gain a 'snapshot' of current projects and activities in Devon which promote engagement with the natural environment.

Local Research

Whilst taking a birds eye view of Devon, this scoping review has focused on two areas with high health inequalities and good access to natural space – Exeter and Buckfastleigh.

Following a tendering process, *Transform Research* were appointed in early March 2014 to undertake the primary research during March and April (see annex a for full report). This research aimed to collate intelligence on the views, opinions, knowledge and behaviours of people living in Buckfastleigh and Exeter who live with good access to natural space, concerning their experiences of accessing natural spaces. The sample included:

⇒ low income, parents, grandparents and carers living in an area of deprivation with access to green space.

The research was comprised of 6 focus groups and in-depth interviews with a selection of the participants. This research was conducted in three locations:

⇒ Buckfastleigh Primary School

⇒ Buckfastleigh Children's Centre

⇒ Exeter Mincinglake Children's Centre

In total, 43 parents, grandparents and carers were consulted during the research, in addition to 10 children from Buckfastleigh Primary School. 65 of the adults were involved in the 6 focus groups listed above and 11 were interviewed alone (annex a contains full details of the primary research).

Following the research, the opinions and views expressed during the focus groups and the in-depth interviews were analysed to identify consistent themes, underlying issues and for "testing" the suggested solutions that emerged.

Behaviour Change Theory

The scoping review utilises the Theory of Planned Behaviour as described on the next page.

The Social Marketing Approach

Social marketing is a systematic and planned process combining ideas from commercial marketing and the social sciences it is a proven tool for influencing behaviour in a sustainable and cost effective way. See appendix 1 for a more detailed explanation of this approach.

ACCESSING NATURAL SPACE

The Challenge

Devon has the potential to provide endless opportunities to be naturally healthy. We have 42 beaches with Blue Flag status, 2 National Parks, 5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the stunning South West Coast Path (SWCP) and a huge network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Even in inner-city areas such as Exeter, there are 5 valley parks and 13 additional parks and gardens.

Behaviour

However, there are many people in Devon who do not access the natural environment. Access to the natural environment is inequitable, with people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME), people living in urban areas with high deprivation, DE socioeconomic groups, people aged 65 and over, and people with disabilities and / or long term health conditions, being significantly less-likely to visit (MENE, 2013).

In the 2013/14 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey, Natural England found that four million people in England never access natural spaces. The graph below compares some of the reasons for non-access in this group, between the England average, and those in Devon. Although this graph does not take into consideration the age structure of the population in Devon, it shows that 'non-participants' in Devon were more likely to cite being "too busy at work", "poor health", "old age" and "physical disability" as being reasons for not accessing the natural environment.

In England, 4 million adults do not access the natural environment. Of these...:
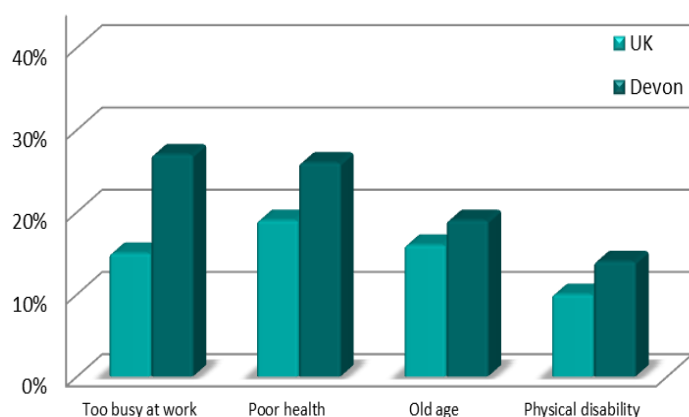
Change

Through the naturally healthy agenda, the Devon LNP aims to:

> "Ensure that everyone in Devon has the opportunity and the confidence to be naturally healthy in order to improve their health and wellbeing."

To achieve this, the LNP will focus on:

⇒ Those at risk of suffering from poor health, in order to reduce dependence on treatments and health services.

⇒ Those who currently do not engage with the natural environment.

⇒ Children and young people, along with their schools and families.

⇒ Our workforce.

With success being defined as:

> "A greater number and diversity of people being naturally healthy."

Challenge

To support the LNP to achieve this objective, this report uses a social marketing approach to explore the barriers and motivators which mediate access to the natural environment. Tackling these barriers and optimising these motivators is crucial to increasing both the number and diversity of people who access the natural environment. This is of utmost importance to harness Devon's natural benefits and reduce inequalities in health.

What's happening in Devon?

A range of opportunities are currently on offer in Devon to facilitate access to the environment and encourage people to be naturally healthy. A snapshot of these were mapped for the scoping exercise and are in annex b. Case studies of these projects are in appendix 2.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE THEORY

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) states that individual's attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control will all influence people's intention and internalise their actual behaviour. According to the theory, behaviour change can occur through three processes:

1. by an increase or decrease in a particular belief

2. through the creation of a belief

3. through the increase or decrease in a value that the person holds.

In order to change the behaviour of Devon residents and encourage people to become more naturally healthy, and to improve their access to the natural environment, interventions will need to be sensitive to and address these three elements and processes.

This behaviour change theory suggests that working with those who are currently not accessing the natural environment at all will be very time consuming and involve a lot of support. Moving those who are currently accessing the natural environment very infrequently to regularly will require a different approach. The implementation of any interventions or development of solutions will need to take this into account.

The School of Public Health Research has developed a framework described on p13 which applies the Theory of Planned Behaviour to the subject area of accessing the natural environment looking at the barriers and motivators (Garside et al., to be published).

Diagram representing Theory of Planned Behaviour from Conner and Sparks (2005):
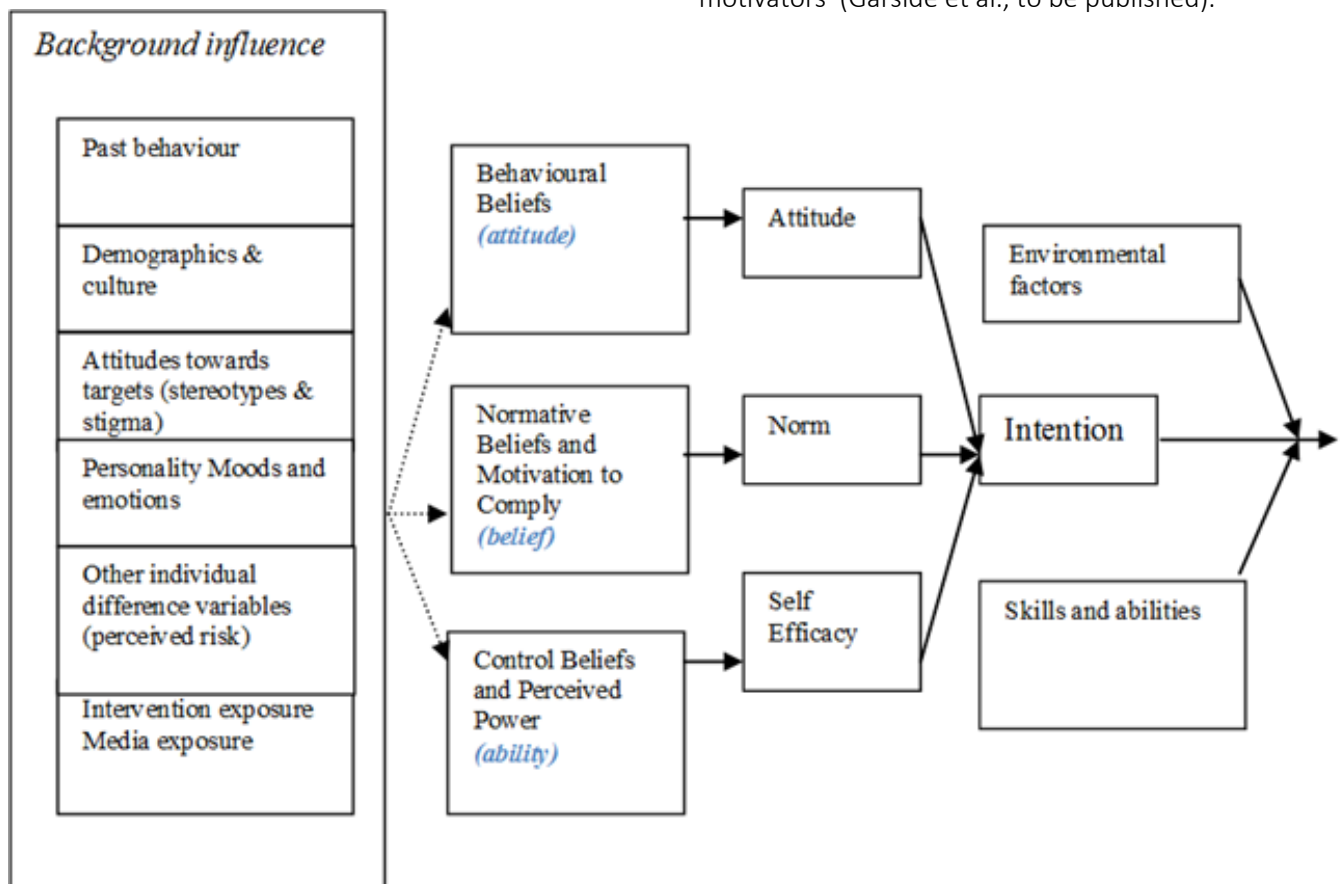
THE EVIDENCE BASE

Health and the Natural Environment

The idea that there are health benefits to be gained from promoting a 're-connection' with the natural environment has generated considerable interest in recent years. This has been reflected in a body of research which has rapidly increased in both quantity and quality over the past half decade. The literature review, which informed this scoping report (annex c), aimed to appraise this large body of research in order to establish a more complete picture of the relationship between health and the natural environment.

Findings

Using a defined search strategy, the review identified over 50 studies directly related to the research question. Taken overall the evidence suggests that there may be considerable benefit to health from promoting engagement with the natural environment. Current evidence suggests that this association may be more strongly associated with mental health than physical health.

However, there is some limited evidence to suggest that exposure to natural environments may contribute to improved general population health, reduced health inequalities , and improved social cohesion.

Limitations

Whilst the evidence does indicate an association between the natural environment and health, it is clear that this is an important area for further rigorous research. The evidence base is clearly still evolving, and there are a number of important questions (relevant to both policy and practice) that need to be researched.

Summary and Next Steps …

In summary, whilst the evidence suggests that there may be a causal relationship between engagement with the natural environment and improved health, it is clear that further research is needed in this area.

As such, any intervention designed in Devon to promote engagement with the natural environment should ideally include, well-designed evaluation. This would allow an improved understanding of the health benefits of such interventions, in addition to the social and economic benefits and costs in Devon.

Evidence overview - Natural Environment (n/e) and Health *(see annex b for full literature review)*		
Intervention	**Health Outcome**	**Evidence Level**
Physical activity in n/e	**Improved mental health** (including self-esteem, positive mood and attention)	Good
Residential access to n/e	**Improved mental health** (including reduced stress, better general mental health, reduced anxiety, depression, loneliness and better social support)	Good
	Improved general population health (including increased longevity, reduced disease prevalence, and perceived general health)	Good
	Reduced health inequalities (including reduced health inequalities [related to income deprivation] for all-cause mortality and circulatory disease)	Medium
	Improved mental health in children (including improved concentration and functioning in children with ADHD, improved concentration and self-discipline in inner-city girls, reduced stress and improved self-worth in children in rural areas)	Weak
	Improved social cohesion	Weak
	Increased levels of physical activity	Conflicting evidence
	Overweight and obesity	Conflicting evidence

THE EVIDENCE BASE

Perceptions of the Natural Environment

Positive Perceptions

There are a number of studies, that explore public attitudes towards the natural environment. These studies demonstrate that lay perceptions are, on the whole, very positive. The predominant theme emerging from the literature is the perception of the emotional and mental health benefits of being in the natural environment. The literature discusses the restorative, de-stressing and relaxing capacity of the natural environment - a way to escape from the dirt, stress, noise and visual hardness of urban settings (Bell et al., 2004; Dunnett et al., 2002; Chiesura, 2003: Dines et al., 2006).

Natural environments are also frequently noted as areas of attachment and affection for individuals and communities, and as distinct features of localities. They are places which mark different periods in people's lives; serving for childhood play, for teenagers to let off steam, for romance and courting, and as a place to bring children and grandchildren (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2001; Comedia and Demos, 1995). Although, a number of studies stress that people from older age groups often feel that children's opportunities to play outside are now much reduced compared to when they were children (Ward-Thompson et al., 2004; O'Brien, 2006).

Similarly, Ashbulby et al., (2013) found that families in the South West value opportunities for physical activity and active play afforded by beaches, with key health benefits including psychological ones, (experiencing fun, stress relief and engagement with nature). Increased social and family interaction were also highlighted as benefits.

A number of other studies found that natural spaces in urban areas are important spaces for social interaction, particularly for people who may spend a lot of time at home, such as 'at home mums' and older people (Krenichyn, 2004; Kweon et al., 1998), in addition to being an important space for people from different ethnic groups to interact and meet people from different communities (Dines et al., 2006).

Preferences

Further to exploring perceptions, a number of studies explore preferences for different types of natural space. For example, Giles-Corti et al., (2005) found that spaces with different features, attributes and areas of interest are generally preferred over spaces that are featureless.

Other studies suggest that different types of open space are valued for different reasons. Ozguner and Kendle (2006) explore attitudes towards a botanic garden, and urban woodland in Sheffield (UK) by interviewing users of both sites (n=200). The majority felt that the botanic garden was safer and more peaceful and quiet, a better place to relieve stress and experience a sense of renewal. The woodland offered more of a sense of naturalness, freedom and opportunities for social contact. Animals, birds and wildlife were the most popular feature in both sites, in line with findings of other surveys which show that points of interest such as wildlife are important to park users.

Backlund et al., (2004) reports on a survey of more than 1,000 people's preferences for public space in Illinois (USA). The survey showed greater preferences for undeveloped open spaces: lakes, ponds, state parks, natural areas, forested areas, wildlife habitat, parks, walking trails, playgrounds and much less support for sports fields and golf courses, which were seen to be limited in use.

THE EVIDENCE BASE

Perceptions of the Natural Environment

Exeter canal; Tony Howell.

Holland et al., (2007) observed a number of different types of public space in the UK, including green space, shopping centres and town centre street locations. The use of green space was most affected by the seasons, time of day and weather conditions. People using the municipal park and canal towpath were seen to behave in less formal and sometimes more intimate ways. These spaces were free, and not highly regulated, which made some feel uncomfortable, but attracted others, particularly those who might have been "excluded" from town centre or commercial meeting places. Certain groups of young people and groups of street drinkers, homeless and unemployed people used the municipal park all year round.

Negative Perceptions

Despite these positive perceptions, personal safety and fear of crime feature as a key concern among users of natural spaces in almost all the studies which report public attitudes. Such fears and concerns act as barriers to the use of natural spaces, and are negatively associated with usage patterns (Glaser, 1994; Ward-Thompson et al, 2004). Apart from fear of assault or violence, incivilities (debris from drug use, dog fouling, litter, graffiti, vandalism, poor maintenance, and in country parks and woodlands, fly tipping, use of off-road motorbikes and 4X4 vehicles) are also frequently reported as negative aspects of natural spaces (see for example Bell et al, 2004).

Although a Sport England (2003) survey showed that 57% of respondents felt that safety was good, surveys of park use consistently indicate that people rarely use parks alone (unless they are walking a dog). Despite the perception that natural spaces are particularly important for children, parents frequently express concerns about allowing children to go to natural environments alone or unsupervised by an adult.

Natural England (2010) reports that there is an evident link between poor quality natural space and low levels of use. Lack of use, neglect and poor maintenance and evidence of neglect and poor maintenance can mean the community spaces become focal points for anti-social or negative behaviours. Evidence suggests that a lack of people using an area reduces the potential for informal and natural surveillance. For example, the creation of a well-used communal area in high rise estates in the US reduced crime and increased community safety through increasing the number of people in the area and positive social interactions between them (Kuo, 2003).

A survey of community groups (reported in CABE, 2004) highlighted that one-third of public parks were estimated to suffer from unacceptably high levels of vandalism and behaviour-related problems. Such perceptions have serious implications for efforts to promote local and neighbourhood natural space in communities with anti-social behaviour problems (perceived or real).

THE EVIDENCE BASE
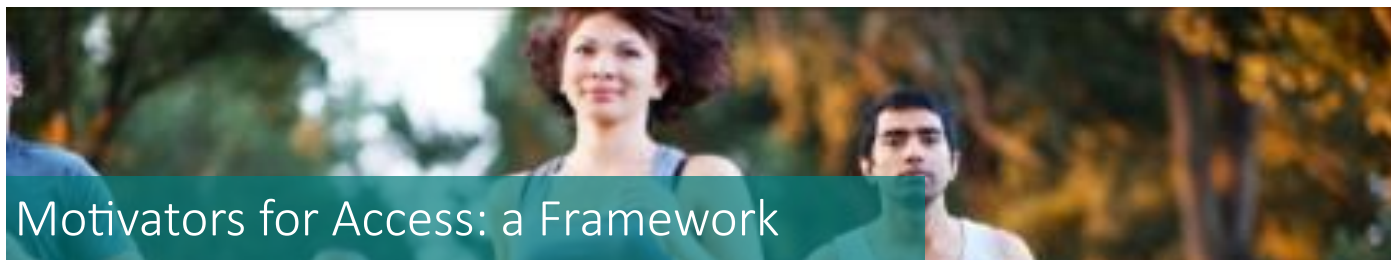
Motivators for Access: a Framework

The School for Public Health Research

The School for Public Health Research have designed a framework to illustrate why people are motivated to engage with the natural environment through activities. The modelling identifies pathways through:

Motivators included:

⇒ Expectations

⇒ Personal identification

⇒ Perceptions of self

⇒ Fulfilment

⇒ Social identity

⇒ Physical ability.

The pathways are drawn from qualitative research and represent how people think they benefited and what factors were important in their experiences of engaging with the natural environment. It is useful to help understand what factors are important to people in motivating them to take part. These 'motivators' and 'barriers' were an important factor in the health and wellbeing impacts of the activities.

The impacts identified by marginalised groups (those suffering from mental health problems, unemployed) were typically positive for both physical and mental health and mediated through mechanisms of social contact, regaining self-confidence and achievement.

Note: The research is currently under Cochrane review for publication (Husk K, Lovell R, Cooper C, Garside R), Participation in environmental enhancement and conservation activities for health and well-being in adults: a systematic review of quantitative and qualitative evidence, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (forthcoming).

Diagram representing some of the motivators and barriers identified by the available research:
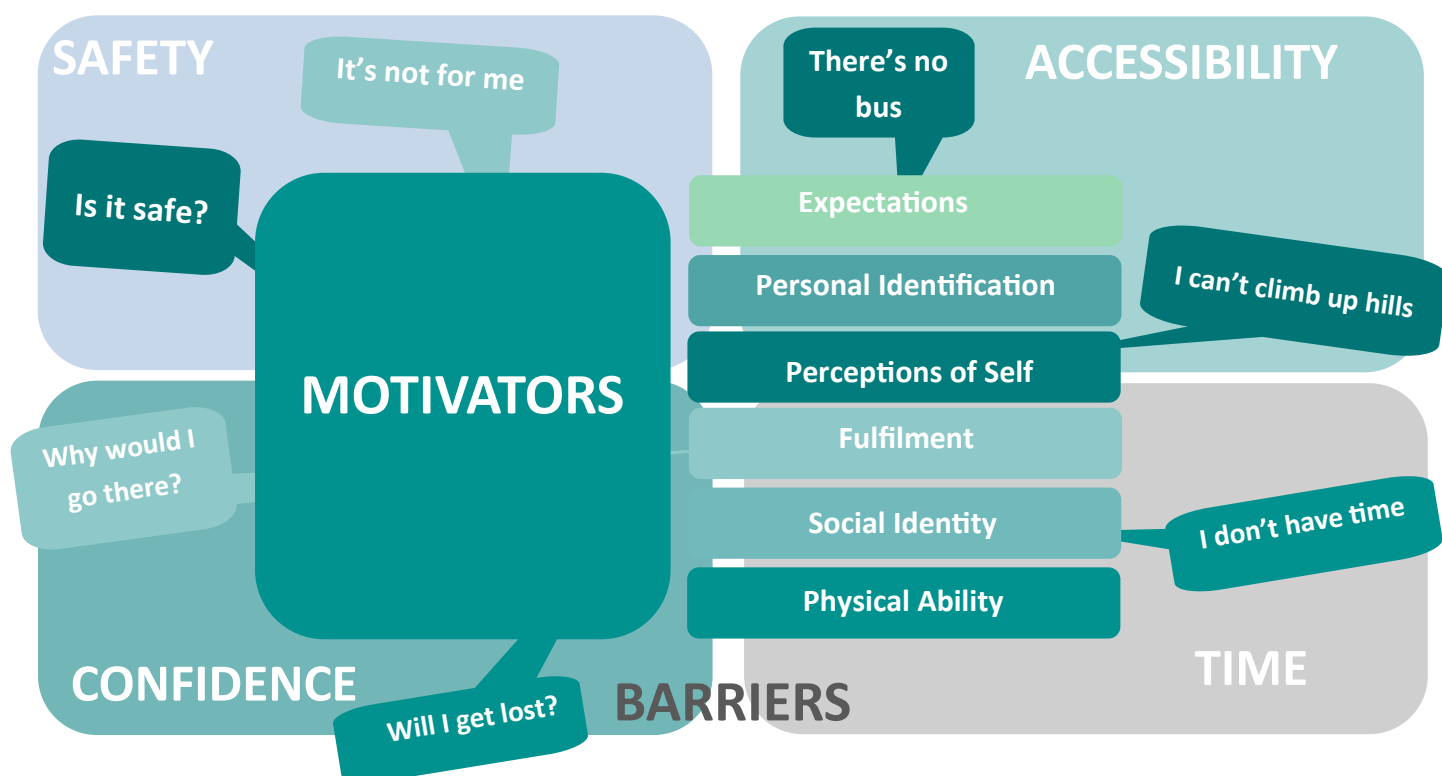
STAKEHOLDER INSIGHT

Stakeholder and Expert Opinion

Devon has a wide range of organisations providing opportunities for people to connect with the natural environment. This report captured a snap shot of these through interviews with the Devon Wildlife Trust, The National Trust, South Devon AONB, Living Options, Devon Countryside Access Forum (DCAF), Public Rights of Way and the Community Council of Devon (CCD).

Barriers

Interviews with local experts and stakeholders, supported the findings of the primary research and emphasised the importance of understanding that there are different barriers to accessing different types of natural environment and for different groups of people.

Barriers included:

- Personal safety
  ⇒ Poor lighting (urban)
  ⇒ 'Groups of youths'
  ⇒ Livestock / mud
- Confidence
  ⇒ Fear of the unknown
  ⇒ Will I get lost? / I don't know where to go?
  ⇒ Cannot map read
  ⇒ Cultural component - 'normality' of access within families / communities
- Accessibility
  ⇒ Having confidence that terrain is flat and accessible
  ⇒ Physical barriers (styles etc.)
  ⇒ Limited mobility
  ⇒ Distance
  ⇒ Transport / cost
- Lack of leisure time
  ⇒ Competition from social media / technology and other organised activities

Targeting

In accordance with the MENE (2013) data, interviewees felt that these existing local opportunities are predominantly accessed by 'middle class' families, and people over 50, who are physically active and are confident, and have previous experience of accessing natural spaces. Most stakeholders interviewed were actively trying to attract other segments of the population particularly those from more lower socioeconomic groups, but admitted that this work required more time and effort and they were not sure how to best achieve this. The most successful ways of engaging with such groups seemed to have been through schools outreach with families and free events in city centre areas.

Knowledge and promotion of the opportunities provided by stakeholders varied but tended to be predominantly through traditional methods such as flyers and posters, in addition to the use of social media and websites.

Evaluation

Evaluation of projects and initiatives came through strongly as being an issue for stakeholders. In particular the cost and practicality of being able to undertake reliable good quality evaluation on the outcomes and impact of projects. This was seen as a particular issue because such evaluation is often a requirement of securing funding alongside usual output and process orientated measures.

In Summary …

Devon's natural environment is recognised as a precious resource by all stakeholders and it is acknowledged that different users and interests of the 'space' have to work in harmony. The issue of connecting the population of Devon with their natural environment is recognised as not simply being about increasing access at the expense of others. Mutual respect is required from tourists, land managers, owners and locals using the space to develop and increase access by all groups responsibly. This needs to be done in a sustainable manner that is respectful of the different parties, and their issues and interests.

PRIMARY RESEARCH IN DEVON

Devon Residents

Primary Research in Devon

Qualitative research was undertaken through six focus groups across Devon. All six groups had discussions about local natural space and the natural environment and focused on:

1. Perceptions of what constituted participants' local green space;

2. Use of the natural space (activity, level of use and accompaniment);

3. Motivation and benefits for accessing natural space;

4. Factors limiting access to natural space.

Two of the focus groups concentrated further on how to increase access to green space (the other 4 concentrated on increasing physical activity). These took place in:

- **Buckfastleigh:** focusing on low income, parents and grandparents living in an area of deprivation with access to green space; and

- **Exeter:** focusing on *"inactive"* 30 – 50 years olds living in Exeter, both in work and/or low pay or unemployed.

With both sets of participants, the research explored the barriers inhibiting the use of green space and limiting physical activity, alongside the motivators encouraging use and increasing likelihood of activity.

What was most striking about the findings, was the consistency of the findings in both participant groups. That is, that despite being categorised into two potentially very different participant groups in terms of their age, geography and levels of physical activity, the answers given by the participants were bound by the more "powerful" factors that they shared in common. These were:

- Having little time available, due to parenting, work, job search, etc. and the lack of suitable options in the time they did have available;

- Having low levels of income, particularly disposable income for spending on transport getting to natural space or membership fees for physical activity;

- Having limited motivation, confidence and/or support for engaging in exercise or accessing green spaces beyond their immediate locality.

Summary - word association findings	
Some words and phrases had very positive connotations:	
Woodlands	For enjoyable activities (i.e. exploring and climbing)
Parks	For children playing and fun (i.e. swings, running, team games)
Dartmoor / Moorlands	For natural beauty and attractiveness
Other had far less positive associations for *some* of the participants:	
Physical activity	Seen as hard work, tiring, being worn out
Footpaths	Associated with dog mess and rubbish
While some produced very literal responses:	
Green space	i.e. green fields, grass, parks
Natural Environment	i.e. flowers, forests, animals and insects

PRIMARY RESEARCH IN DEVON

Devon Residents

Barriers

Five main sets of barriers were cited as limiting the research participant's access to natural space, particularly any space beyond immediate walking distance:

1. Lack of transport, concern for shelter and time

Few of the research participants had access to a car. Others only had limited access. This was a significant barrier to access any natural space beyond walking distance. Participants also highlighted that lack of transport also meant lack of shelter during bad weather. Lack of transport also impacts greatly on the time poor as it can take considerably longer to access areas with children when dependant on public transport.

2. Cost

Cost was also a major concern, specifically in considering accessing natural spaces further afield – in terms of paying for public transport and/or for food (ice cream, drinks, etc.) "needed for the children on a day out".

3. Need for personal support and/or company

Some participants required support to visit natural spaces, such as help with mobility issues, wheelchairs and transitions between vehicles. Others wanted company when going somewhere new because they had not been there before and did not feel comfortable/ confident.

4. Lack of knowledge and confidence

Many participants were unsure of the specifics of "where to go?" and "what to do?" when considering visiting natural spaces beyond their immediate localities, such as Dartmoor or Exmoor. This lack of knowledge about suitable natural spaces to access clearly impedes access.

5. Not being in the habit of accessing green spaces

Not being in "the habit" of visiting natural space, as with undertaking physical exercise was a significant limiting factor.

> "People have a good attitude and want to access green space more often. The main barriers are know how and confidence" (Transform, Research 2014; annex a).

Key benefits and motivators

Two key sets of benefits from accessing natural space were identified by the research participants. These overlapped with those identified for doing physical activity:

1. Physical and mental health benefits

Many participants noted the importance of natural space for enabling various forms of physical activity that helped them and their children to "keep fit". Others also noted its value in improving their mental wellbeing by reducing stress and helping them to relax.

2. Getting some fresh air/being outdoors

Many participants highlighted the benefit and value of getting "fresh air" and "being outdoors" that came with visiting green spaces. This was both an important motivating factor for visiting natural spaces and a positive benefit of doing so.

As well as these key benefits, a few other different motivating factors for accessing green spaces were also noted, such as enabling children to see animals and flora and fauna as well as providing a range of interesting things to do, like exploring in the woods.

In Summary …

Overall, accessing green space in general was seen as being a very positive activity and nearly all of the participants said that they would like to do so more often than they currently did. This was particularly the case among those with children, with forests and woodlands being highlighted as particularly enjoyable places to visit .

PRIMARY RESEARCH IN DEVON

Devon Residents

Ideas and Solutions

As part of the research, participants were asked to identify a number of ideas and solutions that would encourage and support them to access the natural environment.

The research groups in Buckfastleigh and Exeter arrived at the following solutions:

- Provide increased information to improve awareness about what is available in natural spaces. This should be targeted at particular audiences and priority groups.

- Establish and promote access to more child and family based learning and action activities in local natural spaces, including woodlands and forests. These should be of interest to people from a broad age group and physical ability. Participants highlighted 'The Gruffalo Trail' at Haldon Forest, Longleat and Sherwood Forest, as examples of good practice.

- Emphasise the powerful "pull" of woodlands and forests.

- Establish coordinated visits to key natural spaces (Dartmoor, South West Coast Path, etc.), run through local community groups for local people in an assisted and subsidised manner.

- Design activities to be informative and inclusive.

- Develop links with transport providers (bus, coach, taxi, car share, etc.) to identify ways in which access issues can be overcome.

- Address vulnerability and isolation concerns in perceived remote natural locations such as Dartmoor, Exmoor, etc.

- Address perceived safety and cleanliness concerns in access to local green spaces (such as teenagers, litter, dog mess, graffiti, etc.).

"Participants were asked to identify a number of ideas and solutions that would encourage and support them to access the natural environment".

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PRIMARY RESEARCH IN DEVON

Devon Children

Children's Profile

A small sample of 10 children from Buckfastleigh Primary School also took part in the primary qualitative research. The barriers and benefits that they presented were very similar to ones the parents/ adults came up with. They were:

Barriers

- Can't get there (access/ transport)
- No one to go with
- Issues with confidence / buddying up

Benefits

- Good for health
- Fresh air

Solutions suggested

From the solutions put forward by the children the most support was for:

- The development of an off-road cycle route from Buckfastleigh to Dartmoor with associated initiatives such as cycling clubs to cover the issues of cycle hire, storage, road safety training, etc.

- Establishing and promoting access to more child/ family based learning and action activities in the local woodlands and forests that were of interest to a range of ages and abilities.

- Their emphasis for any activities in green spaces was on fun and friendship highlighting the importance of wanting to go with friends.

- Buddying up should be considered for children as well as adults to encourage access and build confidence.

Perceptions of Local Green Space

When asked to draw their local green space children interestingly almost exclusively depicted play equipment such as zip wires / swings / slides to the exclusion of any natural elements present in those parks such as leaves, grass, trees etc. No other 'natural environments' such as fields / woods / moorland / seascapes were drawn by the children.

> "Their emphasis for any activities in green space was on fun and friendship highlighting the importance of wanting to go with friends".

WAY FORWARD

Lessons for Practitioners

Target Audience

The primary research looked at parents, grandparents and carers from low-income families with access to local green space (circa 1 mile). When developing an intervention for this segment of the population the following should be incorporated to facilitate maximum engagement:

Note: a full profile for this audience is in appendix 3.

The 'Offer'

- Offer a reason to access the green space (an activity) with a clear call to action.

- That it is multi-generational, everyone is welcome.

- That there is shelter/ perceived safety is factored.

- That you don't need expensive kit, for example "come in your wellies".

- Remember public transport isn't considered good access.

- Ensures ownership / 'it's for everyone'. If it ran last year - tell your audience.

- That it is measurable and must be evaluated.

Communicating the message

- Words 'natural environment' do not resonate (and people may not associate local green space as a 'natural environment' but more associated with an activity.

- 'Green space' (i.e. colour) works, and evokes positive emotional memories including childhood memories.

- Different perceptions are associated with different types of natural space: i.e. Parks—children and play.

- Dartmoor and Moorland - naturally beautiful, freedom, open.

- Woodland - enjoyable learning and playing activities.

- Paths—negative response - 'dog poo'.

"'Green space' (i.e. colour) works, and evokes positive emotional memories including childhood memories"

WAY FORWARD

Monitoring and Evaluating Behaviour Change

Monitoring and evaluating behaviour change is essential and requires a planned approach. NICE Guidance for behaviour change recommends the following practice:

- Before introducing a new intervention, commissioners and providers of behaviour change interventions and researchers should be clear about the objectives and how these will be measured and evaluated.

- Commissioners and providers should ensure evaluation is carried out by a team of researchers or an organisation that has not been involved in delivering the intervention.

- Researchers should work with commissioners and providers to plan evaluation before the intervention takes place. This may entail getting specialist input (i.e. from the NIHR research design service).

- Researchers should use objective, validated measures of outcome and process if they are available.

- They should ensure the design makes it possible to provide new evidence of effectiveness and, ideally, cost effectiveness – and details on why it is effective (mechanism of action). See principles 7 and 8 in 'Behaviour change: the principles for effective interventions' (NICE public health guidance 6).

- Use consistent, valid, reliable measures (using the same tools to assess behaviours) before, during and following an intervention (that is, ensuring baseline and outcome measures match).

- Use rigorous qualitative assessments to evaluate how well interventions will work in practice and how acceptable they are to service users and practitioners.

- Assess processes and outcomes using both objective and self-reported measures.

- Establish and ensure routine data collection.

- Use adequate sample sizes.

- Assessment of long-term outcomes.

- Providers of existing interventions should work with researchers to ensure they are rigorously evaluated.

"Monitoring and evaluating behaviour change is essential and requires a planned approach".

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Appendix 1: A SOCIAL MARKETING APPROACH

> "Social marketing is the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques, to achieve specific behavioural goals to improve health and reduce health inequalities"

Combining ideas from commercial marketing and the social sciences - social marketing is a proven tool for influencing behaviour in a sustainable and cost-effective way. This approach helps you to decide:

- Which people to work with?

- What behaviour to influence?

- How to go about it?

- How to measure it?

Social marketing is a systematic and planned process. It follows five steps:
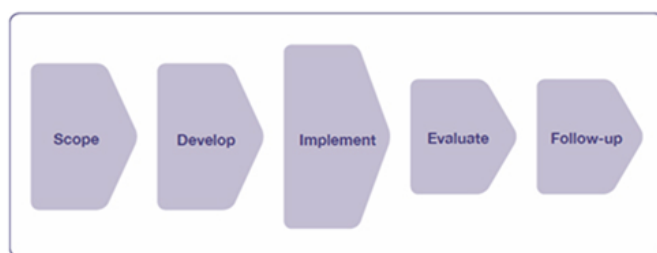
The National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) Triangle has been designed to ensure that the person or 'consumer' is at the centre of the social marketing process. The application of these concepts ensures that existing behaviours are fully understood from the person's perspective.

NSMC Social Marketing Triangle

The Scoping stage is the first step to clarifying the actual behaviour that is to be tackled and possible routes to achieve this. The social marketing framework criteria are employed to ensure the focus remains on the person to develop an understanding of what the actual change will be and what the outcomes for that person will be.

This scoping report uses the following steps to generate insight into the barriers and motivators concerning access to the natural environment:
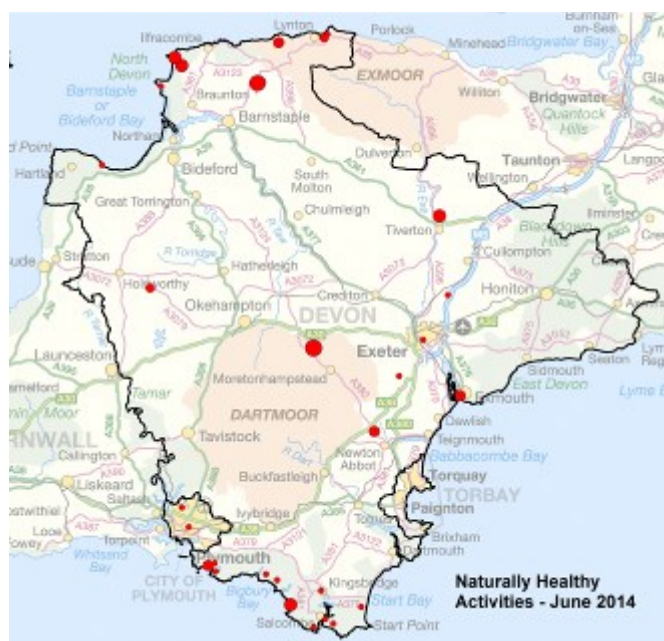
1. Behaviour Challenge - what is the challenge? Outlines known statistics and evidence.

2. Methodology - How the scoping review will be carried out? Which behaviour change theory will be applied (this sets the research approach)? Governance - who the expert advisers / steering group are?

3. Stakeholder Mapping - Outlines existing activities, communications and engagement.

4. What has already been done? - including Literature review of attitudes, knowledge, intervention, benefits and barriers, NICE guidance, intelligence, for example.

5. Segmentation / Primary Research - Explore themes in depth with local population, with research exploring themes of 'exchange' and 'competition'.

6. Analysis and Insight - profile development - Segmentation identified people who share behavioural triggers, themes, barriers, and therefore share possible solutions.

7. Behavioural Proposition (recommendations) - this is a step towards the solution and development phase. It should include a marketing methods mix and be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound).

Appendix 2: CURRENT ACTIVITY IN DEVON

Naturally Healthy Activities

LNP partners and wider stakeholders were asked to provide details of opportunities and initiatives to be naturally healthy and increase access to the natural environment that are currently underway in Devon. A 'snapshot' of these initiatives was produced, and is available in annex c. The following map illustrates this 'snapshot', with red dots representing an activity or a number of activities (the larger dots represent more activity).

Naturally Healthy Case Studies

Moor Men's Health

In 2011 Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) formed a partnership with NHS Plymouth to deliver a new project targeted at men living in the Devonport area of Plymouth.

Men were recruited using leaflets, posters, newspaper articles, by word-of-mouth, local libraries, community centres, GP practices and through partner agencies. The participants each took part in 6 activity days on Dartmoor. Each day had a theme including:

- **Cardiovascular fitness** – long moorland walks
- **Muscular strength and coordination** – vegetation clearance, footpath maintenance and archaeological restoration.
- **Emotional expression** – communication and inter-personal skills with a specific focus on mental wellbeing.

Evaluation

At the end of each day, meetings were held in Plymouth to explore some of the strengths of the programme and understand barriers to future 'healthy choices'. Participants also undertook a further health check and were asked to repeat the well-being questionnaire they completed on the recruitment day.

The before and after health measurements outlined above, yielded the following results:

- 57% improved their blood pressure 53% improved their resting heart rate
- 55% improved wellbeing
- 63% increased activity levels
- 73% increase in confidence to visit Dartmoor .

Appendix 2: CURRENT ACTIVITY IN DEVON

Exeter Wild City

Exeter Wild City is a partnership project between Devon Wildlife Trust and Exeter City Council. The project aims to:

- Make Exeter a national beacon for urban wildlife

- Enhance and protect the wildlife value of green space in the city

- Maximise the social and economic benefits of being a "wildlife city"

- Ensure that the growth of Exeter respects the underlying ecological systems on which the life of the city and the region depend

The project works across the city with different organisations to create opportunities for people to enjoy wildlife within the city. Nearly every school in the city is part of the Wildlife Champions Network and large organisations and employers have developed biodiversity projects. The Big Tree Plant directly involved over 3000 people and 3000 + trees! The following map shows the huge variety of projects going on across Exeter!
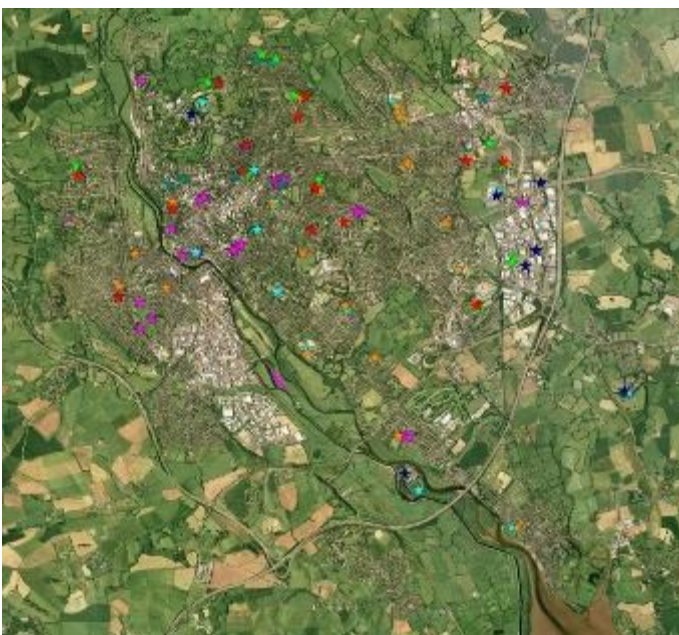
More information is available on the Devon Wildlife Trust website: http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/exeter-wild-city/

Countryside Mobility South West

Countryside Mobility South West is a not for profit mobility equipment hire scheme working to improve access to the countryside for people with limited mobility living in and visiting the South West region.

The scheme was established in 2010 and is operated by the charity, Living Options Devon, a user-led organisation working to ensure that people with disabilities and deaf people are empowered to lead the lives they choose.

They work with a variety of partners who hire out our Tramper mobility scooters and wheelchair accessible Wheelyboats at their visitor attractions across the south west, to enable people with limited mobility to enjoy and access to the countryside. They undertake safety assessments and Disability Access Audits at each site, aided by two access auditors who have first hand experience of living with a physical disability.

For further information see the Living Options website at: http://www.countrysidemobility.org/

Appendix 3: TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILE

Target audience:

Parents, grandparents and carers from low-income families with access to local green space (circa 1 mile).

Current Behaviour:

Access local green space with a common purpose of children's play, with certain caveats around time of day, and how they visit (i.e. avoiding gangs of teenagers, paths with dog mess), but do not tend to visit other natural spaces which are further afield.

Barriers:

Feeling of vulnerability due to lack of transport (distance, time and thought of being stranded), cost, difficulty with access, physical ability, confidence to access and lack of awareness around 'why would I go'? 'where would I go?' 'what would I do when I get there?', habitual (i.e. you go or you don't go - "before today I'd never even thought of it [Dartmoor]").

Triggers (timing / seasonal):

Weather, seasonal, animals (attraction), coordinated activities and things to do, perceived benefits, safety, awareness and knowledge.

Communications messaging:

- Words 'natural environment' do not resonate (and people may not associate local green space as a 'natural environment' but more associated with an particular activity.

- 'Green space' (i.e. colour) works - and evokes positive emotional memories including childhood memories.

- Different perceptions are associated with different types of natural space: i.e. parks - children and play.

- Dartmoor and Moorland - naturally beautiful, freedom, open.

- Woodland - enjoyable learning and playing activities.

- Paths - negative response - 'dog poo'.

Triggers:

- Offer a reason to access the natural space (an activity) with a clear call to action.

- Ensure that it is multi-generational and reinforce that everyone is welcome.

- That there is shelter / perceived safety is factored.

- That you don't need expensive kit, for example say "come in your wellies".

- Remember public transport isn't considered to be good access.

- Ensures ownership / 'it's for everyone'. If the activity ran last year - tell your audience.

- Ensure that your activity is measurable and must be evaluated.