

The Case for a Bypass

A recurring theme from many residents was a request for a bypass to ease congestion in The Square and to relieve traffic on other routes.

While it is clear from recent media publicity that some Braunton residents would like to see a bypass built across the Great Field, this would require major changes in current planning and transport policies.

The proposed bypass would need to feature in local and regional planning policies which it currently does not. This point cannot be stressed too strongly.

A strong economic case for the project would have to be made. A bypass would cost at least £2.5m. Government funding would be sought and, as a result, the Braunton scheme would be evaluated against other proposed highway and transportation projects throughout the country.

The proposal would undoubtedly meet strong opposition on environmental grounds. A similar scheme was the subject of a public inquiry in 1992/3 at which time the overriding historic and environmental significance of the Great Field was deemed more important than a bypass. Since then, environmental issues have been given much greater priority, particularly in the eyes of the public.

However, traffic congestion continues to be an issue in Braunton, particularly during the summer holiday period, but the recent travel plan survey indicated that many local people (26%) did not wish to see new road construction as a solution. There was stronger public support for alternative solutions including improved direction signing, car parking advice, better bus facilities and a reduction in car use for school travel.

This Community Travel Plan is a living document that will be developed to resolve travel issues in Braunton. Because of this, a bypass should not be ruled out as a possibility at some future date. However, it is important that residents understand the complexity of the issues, both in environmental terms and economic justification.