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We welcome your comments. Please write to the address below, or email: travplan@devon.gov.uk

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Foreword

With the continuing growth of the economy, car ownership and personal mobility, the need for good traffic data to monitor this growth and inform future policy direction has never been greater. This report recognises that for nearly a decade there have been national and local policies in place to lessen the dependence on the car and provide attractive alternatives.

The 2001 Census indicates that over the past decade Devon's population has increased by 9% and car ownership by 30%.

In the past year, traffic has increased by 3%. Whilst the trunk road network bears a significant part of this increase, there are major implications for congestion in our urban areas.

The County Council has identified four urban areas for which it intends to target the issues of congestion. These are Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot and Totnes. This report includes a significant amount of data for Exeter, Barnstaple and Newton Abbot, whilst information is still be gathered in the Totnes area and will be included in future reports.

Exeter saw a rise in car ownership of 30% over the past decade and journeys can increase by more than three fold during the morning peak period when over 60% of the vehicles are single occupancy. However, the good news is that over half the children walk to school and there is a healthy increase of cycling in the city, particularly on designated cycling routes.

With a rise in car ownership of 25% in the North Devon area over the past decade, Barnstaple has seen a growth in urban traffic over the past year of 3%, whilst Exeter and Newton Abbot have not seen any significant growth. Journey time increases up to six fold on some routes at peak periods, with so many cars carrying only the driver. Park and ride usage and cycling are both seeing a healthy year-on-year growth and fewer children are being driven to school, with more pupils walking.

In Newton Abbot, on the A380, journey times increase by three times in the morning peak and nearly 60% of vehicles entering the town are single occupancy. There is a small but steady decrease in the number of children being taken to school by car, with a significant increase on the use of the school buses. There is some evidence of an increase in cycling.

Car sharing is seen as a key tool in reducing peak time congestion and there has been a steady increase in the number of people registering on carsharedevon.com. However there is not enough data yet to confirm the effect this is having on single occupancy.

The headline figures for serious road casualties continue to show a downward trend, and a comparison with other authorities is also favourable. However there are clearly some areas where further improvements need to be made. These include targeting A-roads for a reduction in the most serious collisions, reducing inappropriate speed particularly in wet weather and reducing the number of collisions involving the more vulnerable road users (cyclists and pedestrians).

This report makes a significant step forward in providing evidence for the use of transport and accident data and provides a clear direction for data collection and analysis over the coming years.

Edward Chorlton
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