

Traffic Issues in Braunton

Report of the Area Engineer (North)

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

- (a) the contents of this report be noted;**
- (b) the Committee support the continued delivery of the Braunton Community Travel Plan;**
- (c) the Committee support the active monitoring and management of traffic in Braunton;**
- (d) the Committee support the traffic mitigation of any new major developments.**

1. Summary

This report seeks to outline some of the key traffic management issues affecting Braunton. The report provides an update on the work already undertaken and outlines future work and issues that will have an impact on the community.

2. Background

At the North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee on Thursday 21 June 2007, it was agreed that a report on the traffic issues in Braunton should be submitted to a future meeting.

The last major review of the traffic issued in Braunton was undertaken during the development of the Braunton Community Travel Plan from 2003-2005. Since then there have been some significant changes that may have an impact on the traffic patterns within Braunton and the ways in which traffic management improvements are identified and funded. Key changes include:

- The introduction of the current Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, which places a stronger emphasis on congestion management.
- The opening of the Barnstaple Western Bypass and the impact that this may have on the way that traffic moves around the North Devon area.
- The development of School Travel Plans that will influence the way that schemes are prioritised and funded.
- The proposed development at the old Brannoc Fibres site and the way in which this will impact on the surrounding area.
- Parking management changes resulting from the introduction of parking charges at Caen Street car park and the move next year to parking enforcement by Devon County Council instead of the Police, when civil parking enforcement begins.

3. Braunton Community Travel Plan

The Braunton Community Travel Plan (BCTP) was developed by Devon County Council in partnership with members of the Braunton community. The aim of the BCTP is to reduce the impact of travel through and within Braunton, whilst maintaining accessibility and a safe and attractive environment.

The BCTP was developed through a wide-ranging consultation process carried out by questionnaire, exhibitions and meetings during 2003 and 2004. The BCTP was formalised in 2005 and includes thirty eight key actions that reflect the views of over a 1,000 individual responses that were received during the consultation process. The BCTP is intended to help shape the

priorities of the County Council and its partners in delivering Travel and Transport solutions over the period 2005-2010. A copy of the BCTP is included in Appendix A.

A number of key actions from the plan have already been delivered. Appendix B to this report provides a summary on progress made with the actions from this plan.

4. Traffic Monitoring and the Barnstaple Western Bypass

The Barnstaple Western Bypass opened to the public on 23 May 2007. This long awaited scheme is a central to the way that traffic is managed in North Devon and it is the driver for many associated traffic management proposals for the surrounding road network.

A comprehensive survey of traffic movements following the opening of the bypass is underway. Surveys have already been undertaken in January, June and October of this year. As well as permanent volume measurements from automatic traffic counters, the surveys have included traffic movements at key junctions including traffic in Braunton.

Basic volume data from the permanent monitoring site on the A361 between Barnstaple and Braunton is available. Data from this site is included in Appendix C.

Traffic volumes on this route have not increased over the last five years. Typical annual volumes fluctuate. But are in the order of 210,000 – 213,000 vehicles per year.

Since the Bypass has opened there has been only five months worth of data to directly compare with previous years. Data from these months, June to October is summarised on Charts A, B C and D.

From Chart A the total volumes show an overall increase of around 600-1,000 vehicles per month since 2003 and 800-1,600 vehicles per month over the previous 2006 monthly volumes. In real terms this is a very small change in traffic volume and does not indicate that there has been a significant impact as a result of the Barnstaple Western Bypass.

A full evaluation report on the traffic changes post western bypass will be prepared next year. This and permanent automatic monitoring can be used to identify and inform future traffic management changes that may affect Braunton.

5. Future Monitoring and Traffic Management

The key to managing traffic in Braunton will be the accurate monitoring of traffic flows and vehicle movements in Braunton and on the surrounding road network.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is one tool being developed to help achieve this. ANPR comprises a system of cameras that read vehicle number plates. Vehicle number plate data not only provides information about the volume of traffic passing the camera. But can also identify the same vehicle at other camera sites to determine the vehicles route and journey time. This kind of detailed information can be used to more accurately assess traffic management changes and also to predict problems on the road network ahead that can then be mitigated by other measures.

The North Devon ANPR system includes a network of cameras at strategic points around Barnstaple. Braunton also has three cameras, one on the A361 Exeter Road, one on the A361 Challoners Road and one on the B3231 Saunton Road. Data from these sites will soon be available.

An Urban Traffic Control System (UTC) is a central computer system that receives and utilises traffic data to proactively manage other electronic systems for traffic management. The principle electronic systems available to manage traffic are signal controlled junctions like the lights in the Square at Braunton, although other systems including Driver Information Variable Message Signs, Electronic Bus Priority Measures, Car Park Variable Message Signs, Access Control Systems and

Real Time Bus Information Systems can also be linked. A UTC can help predict capacity issues on the network ahead and modify signal timings to maximise road capacity or use systems to divert traffic away from problem areas, accidents or closures due to breakdowns or severe weather. The way that data is collected and used with other systems through a UTC will provide opportunities in the future for more effective traffic management in communities like Braunton. The potential to link these systems across county borders will also provide potential for greater prediction and management of peak traffic flows in busy tourist periods.

Driver Information Variable Message Signs are electronic signs that can be used to display detailed information to drivers. They can be used for a number of traffic management purposes. One example is for a sign to be installed at Aller Cross on the A361 near South Molton. This sign could be used to encourage or even divert traffic along the A399 route if there are congestion problems ahead at Barnstaple or in Braunton. Other uses for these types of sign are to promote travel and road safety initiatives, react and provide information about accidents or broken down vehicles. Or in the case of Barnstaple help manage traffic in the event of a bridge closure. These signs can be used with a UTC to help direct vehicles effectively. A system of these signs is being developed for Barnstaple and the surrounding road network.

6. Major Developments

The way in which major developments are managed is vital to mitigate the traffic impacts that they can have on the surrounding road network and to capitalise on the opportunities for developing the road network and sustainable transport infrastructure.

A recent application for the old Brannoc Fibres site off the Velator Link Road is a good example of this. This redevelopment is proposed to include a mixture of residential and commercial development including a superstore. A development of this scale will have significant traffic repercussions and as part of the planning process a traffic impact assessment has been carried out and various measures have been agreed including a new roundabout junction onto the A361, a new pedestrian crossing on the A361 and a dedicated link and footbridge onto the Tarka Trail. Developer contributions have also been secured through a Section 106 Agreement and comprise:

- A £350,000 Public transport contribution
- A £39,000 Education contribution
- A £12,000 Tarka Trail lighting contribution
- A £140,000 public open space and playground management contribution
- A £30,000 South Street traffic management contribution

The impact of a development like this on the neighbouring South Street is an important factor. This Street is already identified in the Braunton Community Travel Plan for the investigation of possible measures to reduce through traffic and/or traffic calm the route to improve road safety. The £30,000 contribution secured above will enable Devon County Council to investigate and consult with residents on measures to improve the traffic management of this street. The contribution towards lighting on the Tarka Trail will help improve the use of this facility for walkers and cyclists and the public transport contribution will help to maintain and improve viable public transport services for the community.

7. Schemes to be Delivered this Year

In the 2007/08 Local Transport Plan Programme we will be delivering the following schemes within the village:

A361 Chaloners Road Zebra Crossing (£20,000)

The need for a crossing facility near to the library and community centre was originally raised through consultation responses to the Braunton Community Travel Plan. Subsequent development of School Travel plans also identified the need for a crossing here and through the School travel plan budget we are funding the construction of a zebra controlled crossing facility.

This crossing has been designed and to minimise disruption this scheme is programmed for construction to start in December 2007.

A361 Exeter Road Puffin Crossing (£25,000)

The need for a crossing facility was identified during last year's annual review of road traffic accidents. An accident cluster was identified on Exeter Road in the Barton Road junction area. Due to the type of accidents involving pedestrians, funding was allocated from the Casualty and Severity Reduction budget to provide a pedestrian crossing facility. The scheme here is for a light controlled Puffin Crossing. The scheme was programmed for construction to start in October. But this start date has been delayed pending a decision by the developer to proceed with the Brannoc Fibres development. If this development proceeds then this crossing facility will be provided by the developers at no cost to the County Council.

A361 Speed Variable Speed Message Signs (VMS) (£7,500)

The Devon and Cornwall Camera safety partnership is now funded by Devon County Council. The aim of the partnership is to use safety cameras for casualty reduction at speed enforcement sites. In Braunton there is a mobile speed enforcement site on the A361 near the Wrafton Inn. A mobile site is one that is attended by a speed enforcement van on a regular basis. But is not a permanent camera site with a yellow camera housing. Because enforcement at mobile sites is intermittent an initiative is being trailed to use speed reactive variable message signs at all times to remind motorists that the site is camera enforced. These sites will then be monitored to see if the VMS has an impact on vehicle speeds and safety while the cameras are not operating.

8. Air Quality

Local authorities have statutory duties for local air quality management (LAQM) under the Environment Act 1995. They are required to carry out regular reviews and assessments of air quality in their area against the standards of the National Air Quality Objectives. Where it is found that these standards are unlikely to be met, authorities must designate air quality management areas (AQMAs) and prepare and implement remedial action plans to tackle the problem.

One of the sites being monitored by North Devon District Council is the centre of Braunton at The Square. Measurements from this site have shown air quality levels are near the threshold for intervention. Now that the bypass has opened, more investigations will be carried out next year to assess the affects that the new bridge may have on air quality.

9. Parking Management

Action 21 from the Braunton Community Travel Plan was for Devon County Council to review the on-street parking restrictions in the village. Other actions in the plan were for the Parish Council to review parking management of the Caen Street Car Park and for all involved to investigate whether there is adequate car parking provision within the village and to agree priorities for enforcement.

Changes to parking management in the village include the recent introduction of charges on the Caen Street car park and the impending introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement by Devon County Council. Both these changes are likely to have a significant impact on the way that on and off street parking is managed in the village.

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) means that local authorities are responsible for enforcing on-street parking controls instead of the police. The law states that CPE must be self-financing. If there is any extra income after the costs of administration and enforcement are deducted then this must be used specifically for improving local transport. This includes improving parking, traffic management, better public transport and facilities for pedestrians or cyclists. Next year Devon County Council will be taking on the duties of parking enforcement when it gains powers for CPE.

Details about the number of enforcement wardens and the locations for enforcement under CPE are still being decided. Devon County Council has been preparing for this change by reviewing and consolidating the existing traffic orders and developing systems for parking management control. Following the introduction of CPE which is provisionally programmed for May next year. It may be necessary to begin a review of on-street parking management in the village.

10. Financial Considerations

Identified schemes will need to contribute to the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. Local schemes can be funded through the Towns Villages and Rural Communities (TVRC) budget. The TVRC budget is broken down into schemes that contribute towards delivering School Travel Plans, improving Public Transport Facilities and providing Local Access Improvements. Other funding sources are available through delivering Casualty and Severity Reduction targets and through Section 106 contributions linked to developments.

11. Sustainability Considerations

All schemes and initiatives to manage traffic in Braunton will need to be either directly delivered by or implemented in association with, the Devon Local Transport Plan. The underlying goal of the Local Transport Plan is to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport, reduce car usage and manage congestion. These goals are key to sustainable transport delivery.

12. Equality Considerations

This report is for information only, there are no equality implications to be considered.

13. Legal Considerations

There are no legal considerations regarding these recommendations.

14. Alternatives Considered

This report only seeks to provide information for members. To ensure the effective delivery of the Local Transport Plan objectives and achieve best value, any future schemes will be fully evaluated against alternative options.

15. Reasons for Reaching the Recommendations

The recommendations have been made so that the Committee can consider the traffic issues affecting the Braunton community and support future measures and proposals to effectively manage traffic.

Joe Deasy

County Electoral Division: Braunton Rural District Council Ward: Braunton

List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: James Anstee

Tel No: 01271 388500

Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
1. North Devon Highways and Traffic Order Committee	21 June 2007	
2. North Devon Highways and Traffic Order Committee	27 March 2007	(EEC/07/105/HQ)
3. North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee	28 March 2006	(ED/06/15/LSO)
4. North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee	28 June 2005	(ED/05/36/LSO)

The following information is a brief summary of the progress made with the actions identified through the Braunton Community Travel Plan.

ACTIONS COMPLETED

Action 4

To continue working in conjunction with parish councils to improve access to the Public Footpath Network, and aim to have 90% available for use by June 2005.

All public footpaths in Devon including those in Braunton and Heanton parishes were surveyed and any works necessary to upgrade the routes were implemented on time.

Action 5

To improve access to and visibility of the zebra crossing at Saunton Road.

Using a combination of land purchased from private dwellings and land secured by agreement through the development of an adjacent residential site. An improvement scheme was prepared to remove the high wall obstructing visibility of pedestrians waiting to cross the road and to construct a new 40m section of footpath linking to the zebra crossing. This scheme was completed in March 2006 at a cost of £28,000. Lighting improvements were also introduced in April 2005 to improve the visibility of pedestrians using the crossing.

Action 6

To complete the footway scheme from Cavie Crescent to the Sports Ground along Saunton Road.

This improvement was identified and incorporated into the Saunton Road Cycleway\Footway Scheme that was delivered in stages from 2004–2006. The total cost for this scheme was £290,000.

Action 9

To investigate the provision of a central refuge on Chaloners Road in the vicinity of the Parish Hall.

A pedestrian crossing facility has been investigated and designed. The recommended scheme is for a zebra controlled crossing facility. This crossing facility is supported by the neighbouring School Travel Plans and is being funded from the 2007/08 LTP School Travel Plan Budget. This scheme is programmed to be constructed during December this year at a cost of £20,000.

Action 14

To complete the cycle route from the village centre to the Sports Field on Saunton Road.

This improvement was identified and incorporated into the Saunton Road Cycleway\Footway Scheme that was completed in stages from 2004 –2006.

Action 19

The concerns of the residents about driving speeds in the Saunton Park Estate are recognised and addressed through a community based speed awareness campaign.

A road safety and media campaign was undertaken and completed during 2006.

Action 20

Inappropriate speeds and road safety on Saunton Road will be addressed through the completion of the cycleway scheme and a revised carriageway layout.

Action completed in stages from 2004–2006 as part of the Saunton Road Cycleway\Footway Scheme. Mobile speed reactive signs have also been used at this site and the area has been targeted through police enforcement.

Action 24

At the Square, to link the traffic signals and puffin crossing light phases to help reduce traffic delays whilst recognising that this will slightly reduce the pedestrian convenience at this crossing.

A scheme was completed in 2005 to link the signal controlled junction at The Square with the nearby Puffin controlled pedestrian crossing on Exeter Road. The scheme incorporated a delay on the pedestrian crossing at peak times to allow vehicles to clear the junction.

Action 27

To continue to work with the schools to encourage traffic reduction through the development of School Travel Plans.

School Travel Plans have now been completed for all schools in Braunton. The actions identified through these School Travel Plans are being implemented in conjunction with the actions from the Braunton Community Travel Plan.

Action 29

Boode Road – to set in place a programme of street improvements including lighting, verges and passing places in partnership with the Parish Council and residents.

A scheme to improve the verges and install new street lighting was completed in 2004.

Action 32

To provide information to residents of private streets on the legal process for adoption including street lighting.

Information letters were distributed to residents of these streets in 2004.

Action 34

To recommend that the management of Caen Street Car Park by the Parish Council be reviewed following consultation to include residents of nearby streets and with regard to the consequences of on-street parking.

Pay & Display parking proposals have been implemented by the Parish Council to manage the daytime use of this car park.

ACTIONS ONGOING

Action 1

To recognise the importance of local travel between Braunton and Barnstaple and the positive effect that tackling congestion in Barnstaple will bring to the Braunton community.

The Barnstaple Congestion Plan has been adopted and is being implemented as a core strategy of the Local Transport Plan. Significant elements of this strategy have already been implemented, including the opening of the western bypass, Car Park Variable Message Signs, Automatic Number Plate Recognition system and various bus priority measures. Other elements are due to go ahead this year including the completion of the traffic management changes in The Square and the installation of Variable Message Driver Information Signs. Work will continue over the next few years to develop and implement new congestion reduction measures.

Action 2

To promote bus priority measures between Barnstaple and Braunton to encourage an increase in this mode of travel.

Dedicated bus lanes were created on Braunton Road into Barnstaple earlier this year. Work is progressing to develop a Park & Ride site on the Braunton side of town. Work is continuing through the Bus Quality Partnerships to monitor and promote more bus travel.

Action 3

To support the development of a wider route-management strategy to help control peak Summer flows in Braunton. For example, improved travel information, Bray valley holiday route, Bus partnership with main tourist attractions.

A route management study was completed in 2005 to cover the A399/A3123 route from Aller Cross to Mullacott Cross, bypassing Barnstaple and Braunton. This study identified priorities for improvement to encourage more use of this route. Some of these improvements have been completed including road widening at Mullacott Industrial estate, major resurfacing works and safety improvements at key locations. Future work has been identified to widen the road in the area of Seven Ash on the A3123 near Combe Martin and to install Driver Information Variable Message Signing at Aller Cross and Mullacott Cross. The driver information VMS can be used with traffic monitoring equipment to divert traffic away from Braunton and Barnstaple in response to situations like large volumes of traffic through Barnstaple and Braunton or in response to emergencies like traffic accidents, broken down vehicles or a closure of the downstream bridge. The A399 Route Management Study will be used to target funding for this route as a long term aim.

Action 7

To investigate and prioritise requests for disabled access improvements with the help of Braunton Disabled Access Group.

Work has continued with the Braunton Disabled Access Group to identify and implement minor disabled access improvements in the village, including dropped crossings, ramps and handrails. This work will continue in future years.

Action 8

To work with schools on walking routes in conjunction with 3 schools' travel plans.

School Travel Plans have identified key walking routes to schools. Work has been undertaken on Wrafton Road to improve footways, at Chivenor Cross to improve the crossing point and along the Tarka Trail. Improvements this year include pedestrian crossings on Exeter Road and Challoners Road. Further work is planned for the Tarka Trail and to assist with School Travel Plans.

Action 10

To prioritise requests for improved bus waiting facilities in partnership with the bus company and the Parish Council. Support new shelters where appropriate.

New shelters have been provided at Homer Road, Chivenor and Exeter Road. Further work will be identified and prioritised.

Actions 11 and 12

To support services to key destinations, e.g. the Hospital, the Railway Station, North Devon College and Barnstaple Town Centre. Devon County Council will do this by seeking to improve information, reliability and service level through the North Devon Bus Quality Partnership. And to increase bus priority measures at congestion spots in Barnstaple.

Work has been undertaken to improve bus priority around Barnstaple and support reliable journeys to key destinations. These works to date have included dedicated bus lanes along Braunton Road, Belle Meadow and along Taw Vale onto The Square. Bus gates have been provided to serve the railway station and Sticklepath and also Rose Lane and Whiddon Valley. Bus priority measures have been installed at The Square to allow buses to turn right towards the Bus Station. Work will continue to develop bus priority measures and to promote initiatives like real time bus information and new Park & Ride facilities.

Action 17

To work with partners on a Safe Cycling Campaign in Braunton, including Driver and Rider Education and identify safe routes to overcome pinch points.

Work being undertaken through the School Travel Plan process and through work by the Road Safety Team.

Action 18

To tackle inappropriate traffic speed by suitable traffic calming measures where supported by residents of the following streets. South Street, Hills View and Church Street.

Traffic Calming proposals have been consulted on and limited traffic calming measures were agreed with residents for Hills View. Future consultation work on traffic calming and traffic management is planned for South Street with any agreed measures being funded by developer contributions.

Action 23

To identify for phased introduction a programme of 20mph zones in specific residential areas.

Existing 20mph restrictions have been extended to include Hills View, East Street and Heanton Street. Further areas have been identified subject to funding.

Action 26

To consult further on traffic management and calming in Church Street including a review of parking.

A consultation on traffic management measures within the street has been undertaken. Parking restrictions were not supported and an experimental width restriction trial has been carried out over the last 8 months. This trial is due for a review with the residents of the street. Feedback from the original consultation also highlighted potential traffic calming measures that will be taken back to residents for comment.

Action 29b

Safety defects identified by residents to be made safe as soon as possible. (Devon County Council policy is for defined safety defects to be made safe within 24 hours on main roads and 7 days on minor roads).

Work is continuing to achieve target response times for reported safety defects.

Action 30

To improve the quality of public signing and reduce sign clutter by working with the community to identify key locations for signing, by better maintenance and by identifying and removing unnecessary signs.

A signing survey was undertaken and some changes have been made. Further work is needed. A proposal has been made to reduce signing clutter along the highway adjacent to the Braunton Burrows Biosphere. This will be reviewed.

Action 31

To prioritise action on flooding and drainage problems in accordance with the current County Council policy.

Some improvements have already been identified and implemented including tidal flaps on the river, a replaced problem drain St Brannocks Well Close and the provision of an additional drain at Mill Stile\First Field Lane. Further work to be identified.

Action 33

To continue to give high priority to effective highway maintenance work throughout the area, with priority given to main roads and footpaths where most benefit will accrue.

Over the last three years highway maintenance improvements have been carried out in the community including the resurfacing of Saunton Road in 2005, footpath resurfacing schemes from Braunton to Coril Head and through Knowle in 2006, footpaths works in parts of Exeter Road 2006/07 and repaving\footpath works in Caen Street this year. Future works to be identified.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Action 21

To review waiting restrictions in partnership with the police and traffic wardens and inform the community about the process of Traffic Regulation Orders.

On hold pending the introduction of civil parking enforcement.

Action 25

To consult in detail on possible measures to reduce through traffic in South Street.

Future consultation work on traffic calming and traffic management is planned for South Street with any agreed measures being funded by developer contributions.

Action 35

The County Council and its partners, including schools, to work to agree priorities for enforcement and Traffic Regulation Order changes.

On hold pending the introduction of civil parking enforcement and the possible knock on effects of charging in the Caen Street car park.

Action 36

To investigate whether there is adequate car parking provision within the village.

On hold pending the introduction of civil parking enforcement and the possible knock on effects of charging in the Caen Street car park.