

PREFACE

Calne is a small market town of 13,000 set on the edge of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with small satellite villages, typical of the rural South West region. The population of Calne area including the six surrounding parishes is about 19,000¹. The local community looks to the larger towns of Swindon, Chippenham, Devizes and Marlborough for hospital services, employment, training and higher education, rail access, and greater choice of services, shops and entertainment.

Traffic levels and an oversupply of car parking give the impression that the only way of travelling around the Calne area is by car. It is accepted that the widespread availability of the car has transformed the distribution of trips throughout the day and week to reach dispersed destinations. However, reducing dependence on private ownership of the car and its use does not mean the only option is to return to the transport scenario of the 1950s ruled by timetabled rail and bus services.

Whilst multiple car ownership is higher than the national average (40% with two or more cars compared to 29% for the rest of England) this does not reveal the level of unmet travel needs since it is less visible. For instance, of the area's 7,715 households 15.5% do not own a car. In addition there is likely to be a degree of unmet travel need in the area's 42.2% one-car households. When aggregating no-car to one-car households, this amounts to 4,413 households, or around 10,000 local residents². Allowing for an adjustment of 10% reduction since the last census this result still represents a considerable proportion of the population that is likely to have a vested interest in viable and sustainable transport options.

Add to these social imperatives the requirement to reduce green house gas emissions, address a surge in childhood obesity, and respond to increasing costs of fuel, and the interest in alternative forms of travel is likely to include all sectors of the community.

Calne Area Transport set out to design a network of credible alternatives to increasing dependence on the private car. The Go-between study and this report are founded on a far sighted vision for Calne and its surrounding area whose time has come.

The challenge now is to develop ways of helping the traveller go anywhere at any time within the constraints of a sustainable travel plan. Any credible plan needs to be firmly rooted in marketing principles and respond to what customers are prepared to use. A Go-between marketing strategy is the starting point and the end point is a travel centre with all the facilities and comfort of a modern transport station so that today's traffic is consigned to history. That's the vision!

If a consensus on the acceptability of the Go-between proposals contained in this report can be reached with the local population, Calne Area Transport will need the resources and resolve to implement the vision.

With the introduction of a Unitary Authority for Wiltshire in 2009 the time is right to chart a course of action over the next ten years to deliver a modern sustainable transport plan that is understood and widely accepted by those living in the Calne area.

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¹ Census 2001

² At an average of 2.44 residents per household