

North Devon Conservatives

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Blueprint to improve safety and cut congestion on North Devon roads

Brakes put on more speed cameras, clampdown on rogue wheel clampers

Time was called this week on rogue clampers, constant road works and unnecessary speed cameras. Philip Milton, Prospective Member of Parliament for North Devon has added his voice to new Conservative plans to reduce congestion and disruption on the roads, while improving road safety.

The new blueprint for a Conservative Government includes:

- Improving safety by switching from installing new fixed speed cameras to alternative safety measures, such as Vehicle Activated Signs and better education.
- Scrapping Labour's unaccountable speed camera quangos and publishing full details of the revenue raised from each existing individual camera - there are currently 87 fixed cameras within the Devon and Cornwall Police area.
- Setting clearer rules on the timing of traffic lights, to address concerns about traffic lights settings being covertly changed by highways authorities to keep them constantly on red.
- Cracking down on rogue wheel clampers, which is a particular problem on private land.
- Freeing councils to pilot innovative schemes, like 'turn left on red' for cyclists.
- Cutting the congestion caused by road works and motorway closures following accidents.

Philip said:

"Under the Labour Government, just getting around has become a daily grind. Law-abiding drivers have to avoid endless road works, cash-extorting rogue clampers and speed cameras installed to raise money rather than improve safety.

"Conservatives will take the practical, common sense measures that are needed to tackle the congestion that is costing North Devon's economy millions. We need more openness and accountability on decisions that affect

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people's lives. Greater use should be made of technology like Vehicle Activated Signs to cut speeding. It's time for change to get North Devon moving."

Notes to Editors

Conservatives have published new plans to make car journey times more reliable and make roads safer:

MAKING OUR ROADS SAFER

- **Switching to better alternatives to fixed speed cameras:** A Conservative Government will promote a switch to alternative ways to make our roads safer such as improved education and vehicle activated signs which have proven effectiveness. For example, we will issue clear guidance to local authorities which will prevent installing new fixed speed cameras unless they can clearly show that a new camera is better than alternative road safety policies. Even if these tests are passed, any new fixed speed camera will have to be funded locally and not using the road safety grant from central government.

For example, the Government's Road Safety Good Practice Guide states that Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) can be more effective than fixed speed cameras. A single VAS can prevent, on average, 3.1 accidents per annum, as opposed to 2.2 for a fixed speed camera (House of Commons Transport Select Committee, *Roads Policing and Technology; Getting the right balance*, 2006, Ev 158).

A Government study concluded that: VAS are very effective in reducing speeds and cut the number of drivers who exceed the speed limit "without the need for enforcement such as safety cameras"; VAS are an "ideal road safety measure" because they are low cost, low maintenance, self enforcing with high compliance, and do not reduce in effectiveness over time; and VAS are valuable because "inappropriate speed for conditions is more likely to be a factor in accidents than speed in excess of the limit" and "encouraging drivers to make sensible speed choices with regard to local conditions is particularly important since driver error is the major contributory factors in 95 per cent of road accidents" (Transport Research Laboratory, *Large Scale Evaluation of Vehicle Activated Signs*, 2002).

- **No funding for new fixed speed cameras:** Central government will not pay for new fixed speed cameras. Local authorities will only be able to put up new fixed speed cameras if they use their own funding (and also meet the preconditions above). All fines will continue to go the Treasury, as is currently the case.
- **Scrapping the speed camera quangos:** We will scrap the bureaucratic Safety Camera Partnerships. Local authorities and the police in each area will need to return to more slimline cooperation arrangements, with the local authority taking a lead on the location and running of cameras. The police's operational responsibility for legal enforcement and issuing tickets will be unchanged.
- **Lifting the lid on fixed speed cameras:** Local authorities will be required to publish an annual report accounting for the use of each camera, the alternatives considered, and the fines collected. This information is currently collected by Safety Camera Partnerships, but Labour have allowed them to keep it secret. By freeing this data, local people will have the knowledge they need to campaign on whether individual cameras should stay or be replaced with other road safety measures.
- **Average speed cameras:** We will put a stop to Labour's planned extensive roll-out of average speed cameras across all roads. Use of average speed cameras should be very limited and targeted on major roads and motorways and then only where there is a specific road safety need which cannot be effectively met using other means. For example, we expect average speed cameras to continue to be used to enforce reduced speed limits during motorway road works but we will stop the roll-out of average speed cameras on urban roads.

MORE RELIABLE JOURNEY TIMES & LESS HASSLE

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- **More decentralisation and flexibility:** We will give greater freedom to local authorities to innovate and run pilot schemes on smoothing traffic flow and using road space more efficiently.
- **Congestion caused by traffic lights:** We will make highways authorities set clear criteria on the siting and timing of traffic lights. We will then require them to publish this information with any supporting statistics and audits they have carried out. This will give people the chance to understand influence the decisions that affect their daily commute.
- **Congestion caused by collisions:** We will work with the police on ways to reduce incident clear-up times on motorways and to ensure the impact of disruption is fully taken into account when decisions are made on road closures. We will seek to improve the use of the electronic signs on our motorways, for example, to divert traffic away from closures. We will consider whether examples of good practice from the railways and the British Transport Police, which involve senior officers in decisions to close major routes, can be used in the context of motorway clear-up. We will require information on the duration of any closures to be published annually to open this issue up to public scrutiny.
- **Congestion caused by road works:** We will increase the maximum level of fines for over-running road works and speed up the delivery of permitting schemes (the current rules only require utilities to give notice of work rather than apply for a permit to carry them out at a certain time). We will give local authorities the power to put tougher restrictions on work on key routes, including piloting lane rental so utilities firms will have to pay a rental fee for the time they occupy the road. We will also introduce a national code of conduct for those who dig up our roads, drawing on the code successfully agreed in London, to cover issues including signage, inspection, deliveries and the removal of spoil outside peak times.
- **Cracking down on rogue clampers:** We will force clampers to abide by a strict code of conduct covering penalties, release fees, conditions for towing (e.g. the time between clamping and towing), and which outlaws linking staff salaries or bonuses to the amount of fines collected. Each firm will also have to be part of an officially recognised trade association, such as the British Parking Association, who will be required to censure or suspend membership from firms who deviate from this code. And we will give drivers access to an independent appeals process. We will also retain the option to ban clamping on private land altogether if cowboy clampers show that they are unwilling or unable to operate within this new regime.

LOCAL FIGURES

The table shows the number of speed cameras in each police force area and road safety figures. Areas with more cameras do not have better safety records.

<i>Police force area</i>	<i>Safety Camera Partnership</i>	<i>Number of Speed Camera Sites (Fixed)</i>	<i>Number of injuries (all severities)</i>
Avon and Somerset	Avon and Somerset	63	5,606
Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire	42	2,318
Cambridgeshire	Cambridgeshire	63	3,762
Cheshire	Cheshire	9	4,828
Cleveland	Cleveland	2	1,582
Cumbria	Cumbria	10	2,187
Derbyshire	Derbyshire	49	4,228
Devon and Cornwall	Devon and Cornwall	87	6,454
Dorset	Dorset	38	3,051
Durham	n/a	0	2,294

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<i>Police force area</i>	<i>Safety Camera Partnership</i>	<i>Number of Speed Camera Sites (Fixed)</i>	<i>Number of injuries (all severities)</i>
Essex	Essex	103	5,753
Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire	27	1,863
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester	155	9,881
Hampshire	Hampshire	48	6,174
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire	74	4,384
Humberside	Humberside	4	3,949
Kent	Kent and Medway	79	6,940
Lancashire	Lancashire	290	7,199
Leicestershire	Leicestershire	16	3,777
Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire	51	3,121
Merseyside	Merseyside	31	5,366
Metropolitan Police and City of London Police	London	524	28,205
Norfolk	Norfolk	19	2,821
North Yorkshire	n/a	0	3,379
Northamptonshire	Northamptonshire	31	2,208
Northumbria	Northumbria	44	5,618
Nottinghamshire	Nottinghamshire	33	4,520
South Yorkshire	South Yorkshire	57	5,522
Staffordshire	Staffordshire	68	4,499
Suffolk	Suffolk	7	2,810
Surrey	Surrey	25	5,939
Sussex	Sussex	60	6,249
Thames Valley	Thames Valley	382	8,503
Warwickshire	Warwickshire	28	2,436
West Mercia	West Mercia	24	4,302
West Midlands	West Midlands	289	10,791
West Yorkshire	West Yorkshire	118	9,428
Wiltshire	Wiltshire	7	2,210
Cleveland		no info available	
Staffordshire		no info available	
England	-	2,957	204,157

Notes:

- Data from Safety Camera Partnership websites as of August 2009.
- Fixed cameras include average speed cameras.
- No information was provided by Cleveland or Staffordshire.

ENDS

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