



NICE guidance on pollution: speed bumps don't cause pollution

NICE guidelines issued this week¹ point to the enormous dangers that air pollution is causing to our city's health.

Road traffic causes more than 64% of air pollution in urban areas and air pollution causes 42 premature death each year² in Exeter.

We clearly have a significant challenge that needs urgent action.

Surprisingly reporting of this guidance from NICE³ is more focused on speed bumps and encouraging drivers to 'drive smoothly' rather than actually tackling the cause of this pollution.

"It's such a shame that the reporting of this NICE guidance has focused on speed bumps and driving smoothly. Mostly unreported have been the NICE recommendations for doing things that will actually reduce pollution - most significant of which are measures to enable people to cycle and walk", says Adam Bell⁴, "cities across the world are demonstrating that to tackle traffic pollution you need less traffic and this is done by making it safe for people to cycle and walk".

The NICE guidelines point to measures such as providing an infrastructure to support low- and zero-emission travel, including cycling and walking routes. They also encourage Councils to consider introducing a clean air zone and congestion charging zones. The guidance also underlines the importance of speed reduction to reduce road danger and injuries.

Professor Paul Lincoln, chief executive of UK health forum and NICE guideline committee chair, states that "The NICE guidance sets out a strategic range of evidence based practical measures to encourage low or zero emissions transport"

Exeter already has some of the highest walking rates in the country and 6% of commuter journeys are by bicycle. However, with a probable 40% increase in commuting traffic over the next decade the city needs to enable a significant shift away from journeys by car.

"To achieve a significant shift of all our travel choices - away from the car and towards the bicycle or foot - demands a proper investment in a dense network of cycle and walking routes across the city. This isn't something we need to do 'for cyclists': it's something we need to do for all Exeter's citizens. To make our city a better place to live in" says Mike Walton, a member of the Exeter Cycling Campaign.

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/news/article/drive-smoothly-to-reduce-harmful-effects-of-air-pollution-says-nice>

² Exeter City Council Place Scrutiny Committee, Sept'16: report by Environmental Health and Licensing Manager: <http://committees.exeter.gov.uk/documents/g4834/Public%20reports%20pack%2008th-Sep-2016%2017.30%20Place%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

³ NICE: the nation's body charged with recommending best practice for improving health and care

⁴ Adam Bell, Exeter resident



“Air pollution seems to be stranded between Exeter City Council’s responsibility for measurement and Devon County Council’s responsibility for our highways. The Exeter Cycling Campaign calls upon the city and county councils to work together to tackle this urgent health problem”

The Exeter Cycling Campaign:

- wants to see cycling become a normal means of moving across Exeter for people of all ages.
- believes cycling has an important part to play in addressing Exeter's challenges of congestion, inactive lifestyles, pollution and population growth.
- recognises that cycling supports local business, boosts economic productivity and contributes to the health and well-being of our workforce.
- Is working to enable increased physical activity, which will significantly ease the burden on our health and social care services.



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Notes for editors

About the Exeter Cycling Campaign



The Exeter Cycling Campaign was formed in 2016 by a group of citizens concerned that the city's key challenges of pollution, congestion and unhealthy lifestyles were not being taken seriously. Getting many more people in Exeter moving by bike will address many of these challenges.

We want to see cycling being a normal, everyday choice for people of every age and ability on safe, connected and convenient paths. This is something that every citizen of Exeter will benefit from.

A more detailed media briefing can be found [here](#).

Website: <http://www.exetercyclingcampaign.org.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ExeterCyclingCampaign/>

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