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Research asks how we travel

A TWO-YEAR study will help gain a better understanding of what influences people's choice of travel, with a view to encouraging them to make more sustainable choices.

More than 2,000 people in Exeter and Mid-Devon will be surveyed during door-to-door visits as part of the research headed by the University of Exeter.

It is working with Devon County Council, Exeter City Council and a range of other agencies to get a better understanding of travel behaviour among residents.

Dr Stewart Barr of the University of Exeter, lead researcher on the project, said: "Fuel prices are going through the roof and we're all constantly being told that we should try and use public transport. Meanwhile, we're becoming more conscious of the health benefits of walking and cycling.

"But are our transport habits

LOUISE VENNELLS

changing? What do we really think? By talking to people across the county, we hope to understand what influences their choice of transport."

This study, which is funded by the European Social and Economic Research Council, aims to get to the heart of the factors that govern people's decision-making on how to travel.

The questionnaires will examine the barriers and motivations that local people face when deciding how to get around.

Dr Barr will also present some of his research at a conference hosted by the University of Exeter and the Met Office, called Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation: Dangerous Rates of Change, which will be held at the University of Exeter from September 22 to 24.

Dr Barr said: "In 2006, we carried out a survey on air travel in Exeter and had a fantastic

response from local people. We hope that people will be able to spare the short amount of time needed to complete these questionnaires."

The researchers ultimately aim to identify different groups of people by travel behaviour and attitude. Their findings will help to make the organisations that are responsible for communicating and campaigning on travel issues better informed about the issues that people face when deciding how to travel.

Ian Harrison, director of transport, environment and culture at Devon County Council, said: "We will be very interested to see the results of this research.

"People's desire to travel continues to grow, so we need to improve our understanding of how they make their travel decisions, and how we can encourage them to make sustainable choices."

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