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Fergus D. Cochrane
 Clerk to the Committee
 Public Petitions Committee
 TG.01
 The Scottish Parliament
 Edinburgh
 EH99 1SP

Your ref:
 PE 1236

Our ref:
 C1056812

Date:

1 May 2009

Dear Mr Cochrane

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1236

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2009 addressed to Susan Malcolm in relation to safety measures and upgrading of the A90 at Laurencekirk. As Transport Scotland operates the Scottish trunk road network this letter has been passed to me to reply. I have noted the detailed points raised in Submission PE1236 and have addressed these below.

As you will be aware, the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) was formally announced in Parliament on 10 December 2008 by Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change.

The outcomes of the STPR were based on meeting the key objectives outlined in the Government Economic Strategy in addition to key strategic outcomes identified in the National Transport Strategy – these include improving journey times and connections; reducing emissions; and improving quality, accessibility and affordability. In addition, a specific objective for the Dundee to Aberdeen national transport corridor is to promote continuing reduction in accident rates and severity rates across the strategic transport network. In relation to the specific points:

Outcome of the meeting between the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change, the petitioner and Mike Rumbles MSP on 25 February 2009

At an earlier meeting on 12 February 2009 between the Minister and Alex Johnston MSP, Nanette Milne MSP, Richard Baker MSP, Nigel Don MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, David Nelson-Chair, Mearns Community Council, Chris Rushbridge, Mearns Community Council and Norman Bankski, Mearns Community Council it was agreed that Transport Scotland's operating company (BEAR Scotland Ltd) would be instructed to undertake an Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) study of Laurencekirk.



The brief for this investigation includes video conflict studies and liaison with the North East Safety Camera Partnership (NESCAMP). The study will provide a full investigation of the north and middle junctions as well as carrying out a review of the measures at the south junction. The vehicle conflict study is intended to help identify any particular difficulties encountered by users of the junctions. The conflict study is scheduled to be completed by the end of May with the full report expected to be completed by the end of June for our consideration.

While the accident investigation will focus on the B9120 (middle) and A937 (northern) junctions with the A90, any improvement measures that might evolve will take into account the operation of all three junctions serving Laurencekirk. At his meeting with Mike Rumbles and Jill Campbell on 25 February 2009, and at his earlier meeting with Alex Johnston MSP (and others), on 12 February 2009, the Minister confirmed that the key actions being taken forward in relation to the A90 at Laurencekirk were:

- Commissioning of an AIP study from 1st April 2009
- Investigation of the trend in speed limit compliance at existing camera locations

Safety Measures Implemented in 2005

You have asked for our view on the claim that measures taken in 2005 to improve safety have proven inadequate. There are three at-grade junctions which lead from the A90 trunk road to the village of Laurencekirk: the north junction (A90/A937), the middle junction (A90/B9120) and the south junction (also A90/A937).

A range of safety measures were introduced at the A90/A937 south junction in September 2005, including safety cameras, a 50mph speed limit with vehicle-activated signs, antiskid surfacing and new road markings. (Some further minor improvements to the central reserve markings and signing were carried out in October 2007 and Late 2008). The 50 mph speed limit Order came into force on 4 November 2005 enabling enforcement to be carried out at the lowered limit.

From January 2001 until September 2005, there had been 3 fatal, 3 serious and 4 slight reported injury accidents in the immediate vicinity of the Laurencekirk/Marykirk junction (the A90/A937 south junction). Since the introduction of the safety measures, there have been no further fatal or serious accidents and only three slight incidents reported between 2006 and 2008 at the south junction. This represents a significant accident reduction at this location and the locus continues to be monitored.

Additional Safety Measures being Taken

As explained above, when Transport Scotland obtains the results of the current Accident Investigation and Prevention study at Laurencekirk we will consider the findings which will be used to inform and identify whether any additional mitigation measures should be put in place.

Road Accident Statistics (annualised for last 10 years) at Laurencekirk and Impact of 2005 Safety Measures

The tables overleaf summarise the road accident statistics for Laurencekirk. Tables 1 and 2 provide data for all three junctions at Laurencekirk. Tables 3 and 4 provide data specifically for the Laurencekirk/Marykirk junction (A90/A937) – i.e. the southern junction.

A90 Section Accidents by Year / Severity				
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
1999	0	1	1	2
2000	0	0	3	3
2001	2	2	2	6
2002	0	0	2	2
2003	0	1	0	1
2004	1	0	2	3
2005	0	4	2	6
2006	0	2	2	4
2007	0	2	2	4
2008	0	1	4	5
Total	3	13	20	36

Table 1: Recorded injury accidents for all three junctions in Laurencekirk.

A90 Casualties Accidents by Year / Severity				
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
1999	0	1	2	3
2000	0	0	8	8
2001	3	3	6	12
2002	0	0	4	4
2003	0	1	0	1
2004	1	2	3	6
2005	0	5	3	8
2006	0	2	5	7
2007	0	2	4	6
2008	0	1	6	7
Total	4	17	41	62

Table 2: Recorded casualty numbers for all three junctions in Laurencekirk.

Note: The figures quoted may differ slightly from those published elsewhere because they were extracted on a different date and the database may have changed due to corrections or the parameters of the retrieval method may differ slightly from those used previously.

The map provided overleaf (Figure 1) plots the location of accidents at Laurencekirk over the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2008. Some accident plots may not be visible due to overlapping on the map scale.

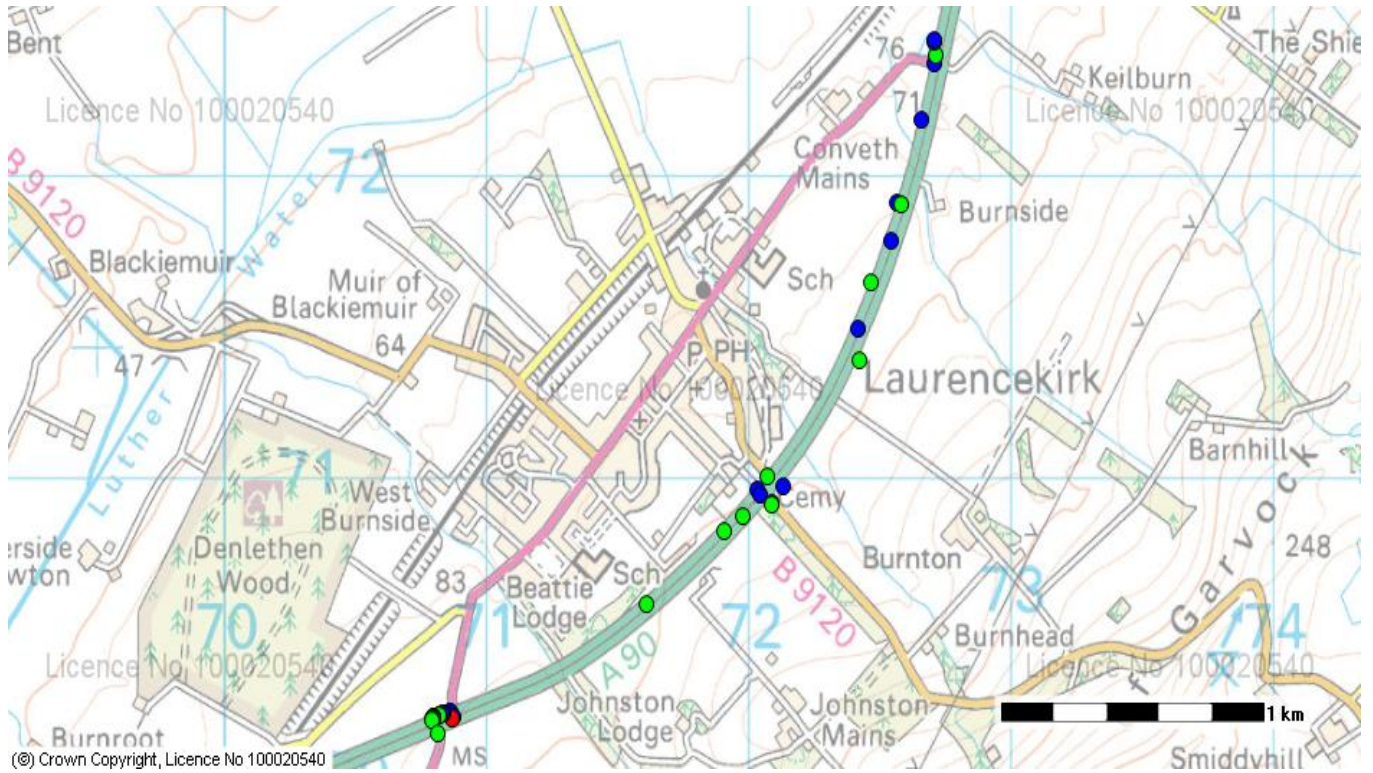


Figure 1: A90 Laurencekirk Junctions Accident Analysis - 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2008

A90 Section Accidents by Year / Severity				
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
1999	0	0	1	1
2000	0	0	2	2
2001	2	2	1	5
2002	0	0	1	1
2003	0	0	0	0
2004	1	0	1	2
2005	0	1	1	2
2006	0	0	1	1
2007	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	2	2
Total	3	3	10	16

Table 3: Recorded injury accidents for the Laurencekirk/Marykirk junction (A90/A937) [i.e. the southern junction]

A90 Casualties Accidents by Year / Severity				
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
1999	0	0	2	2
2000	0	0	7	7
2001	3	3	4	10
2002	0	0	1	1
2003	0	0	0	0
2004	1	2	2	5
2005	0	1	2	3
2006	0	0	1	1
2007	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	2	2
Total	4	6	21	31

Table 4: Recorded casualty numbers for the Laurencekirk/Marykirk junction (A90/A937) [i.e. the southern junction]

Note: The figures quoted may differ slightly from those published elsewhere because they were extracted on a different date and the database may have changed due to corrections or the parameters of the retrieval method may differ slightly from those used previously.

The map provided below (Figure 2) plots the location of accidents at the Laurencekirk/Marykirk (A90/A937) southern junction over the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2008. Some accident plots may not be visible due to overlapping on the map scale.

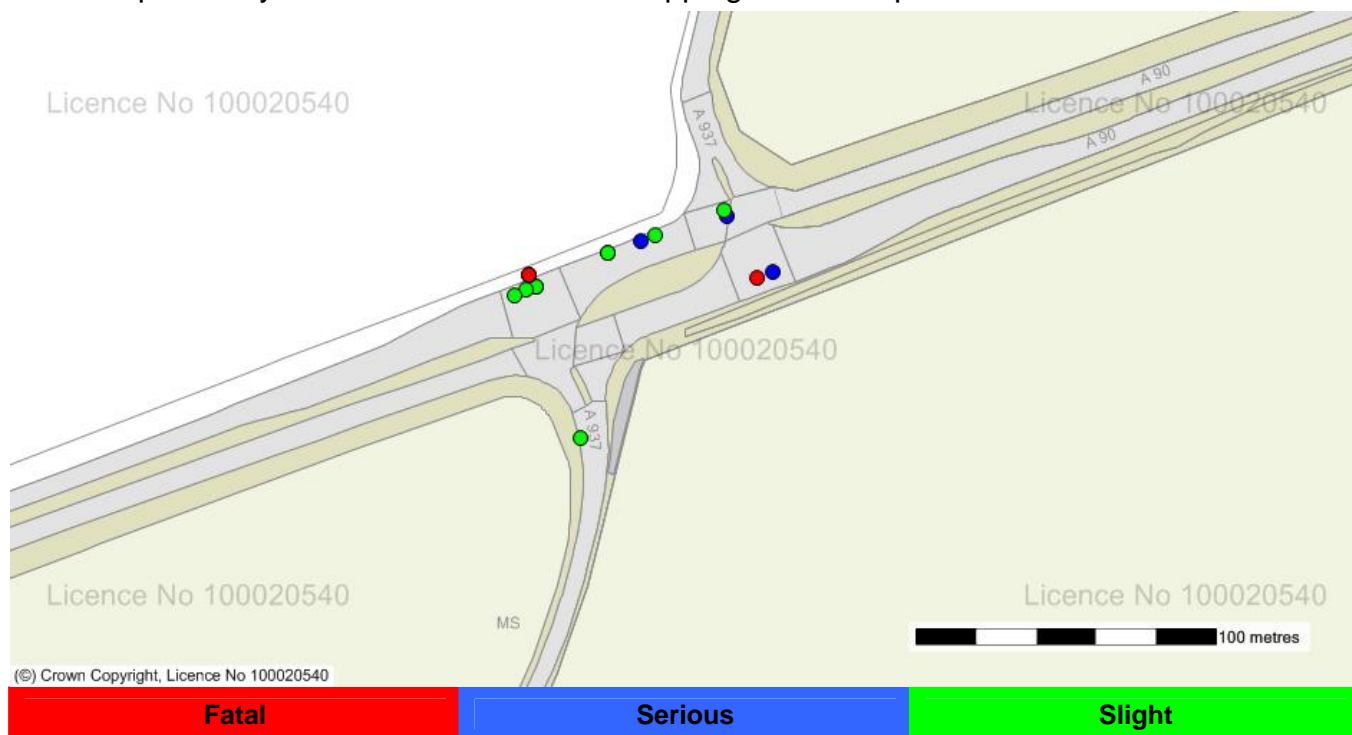


Figure 2: A90 Laurencekirk Junctions Accident Analysis - 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2008 [Laurencekirk/Marykirk junction (A90/A937) - i.e. the southern junction]

Impact of 2005 Safety Measures

The accident statistics (outlined in Tables 3 to 4) would suggest that the road safety measures introduced in 2005, and the further improvements implemented in October 2007 and late 2008, have improved the road safety record at the Laurencekirk/Marykirk (A90/A937) southern junction.

Accident Pattern on this Section of the A90

Accident rates on the A90 corridor are already below the national average. On the A90 at Laurencekirk an issue with local accident clusters was identified and remedial works, referred to earlier in this reply, were implemented to address this issue. The Accident Investigation and Prevention study being undertaken by BEAR Scotland Ltd will provide information about the types of accidents occurring at the junctions and indicate whether there is a discernible pattern to the causation factors. Its findings will be used to inform our future approach to any further mitigation measures that may be required.

Frequency of Safety Reviews

An annual investigation of Transport Scotland's accident database is carried out to help identify and develop a programme of engineering improvements to accident sites that meet predetermined conditions. Currently the threshold used is 3 injury accidents within a 100 metre radius over the previous 3 full calendar years. All sites that have been treated with accident reduction measures are monitored for a minimum of three years to ensure that the treatments have been successful.

A90 Dundee to Stonehaven Junction Strategy

BEAR Scotland Ltd, on behalf of Transport Scotland, carried out a study of the A and B Class road junctions on the A90 between Dundee and Stonehaven. This study recommended that a further investigation be undertaken to determine the feasibility of providing a grade separated junction at Laurencekirk. However, this study was based mainly on the accident statistics prior to the implementation of the road safety measures in 2005, and the further improvements implemented in October 2007 and late 2008. Following the implementation of these measures the safety record for the southern junction improved. Since the study was completed in August 2008 it has been superseded by the outcomes of the Strategic Transport Projects Review. The STPR gave specific consideration to providing a grade separated junction at the Laurencekirk/Marykirk, southern junction, but did not identify this as an appropriate intervention.

Evidence base for not providing a grade separated junction at this location

The STPR appraisal process gave specific consideration to the case for the grade separation of the Laurencekirk/Marykirk junction. Further to the road safety measures introduced in 2005 (and the further measures in October 2007 and late 2008) which resulted in improved accident statistics at this location, it was not considered that grade separation was necessary at this time. However, as outlined above, the safety record at Laurencekirk will continue to be monitored and the findings of the current Accident Investigation and Prevention study will be used to inform our consideration of whether further mitigation measures may be required.

I hope that the Committee find that this reply is helpful in your further consideration of this Petition at your meeting on 16 June.

Yours faithfully

FRANCES DUFFY

