

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank you for allowing me to comment on the Grampian Police Report and letter from Transport Scotland.

I have been amazed and overwhelmed by their findings.

Although, I accept the accident level has dropped at the Montrose/Laurencekirk (southern) junction, since the safety measures were introduced in 2005, and for this I am extremely grateful. Although I do find this nothing short of a miracle. I am shocked that the accident level is rising in general on the A90 within the Laurencekirk Area.

In 2006/07/08 there were 13 collisions with 20 casualties 4 of which were serious comparing this to the previous three years 2003/04/05 of 10 collisions with 15 casualties.

In total over the last ten years over the stretch of the A90 at Laurencekirk 37 collisions and 63 casualties, sadly 4 of these casualties were fatal but the greatest sadness of all is that any one of these could have become a fatality and my greatest fear is that it will come.

The overall picture has to be addressed within this area.

The Southern junction, the A937/A90 Montrose Laurencekirk , has become so congested with traffic, especially during peak times and is dreaded by commuters that, many, are looking for alternative routes to join and exit the A90 and that is why I believe the accident level is rising at other junctions.

The bulk of the congestion, am, comes, mainly, from commuters approaching from the Montrose, Hillside, Craigo, Marykirk and surrounding areas and tailbacks of 50 vehicles and more is usual in the morning as they try to cross the southern junction which is the most direct route to the A90 for the people of these areas.

To avoid this many commuters are using the B974 joining from Marykirk to the A90 at the crosspoles junction near Luthermuir also smaller feeder roads further north of Marykirk. This also causes tailbacks on these minor roads. None of these junctions have been mentioned in any of the reports but are all being affected by the condition of the southern junction at Laurencekirk. During evening peaktimes the problems at the southern junction are reversed, with so many commuters travelling south and turning off towards the Montrose areas, commuters trying to join the a90 from the Montrose side have their sight of the carriageway blocked by the oncoming traffic turning, this is, again, causing tailbacks, and chance taking.

In turn for the people of Laurencekirk and outlying villages and rural areas wanting to travel south or to the Montrose area, the southern junction is, again, the most direct route.

Again through congestion, frustration, anger and genuine fear of this junction people are looking for alternative routes and I believe this is why the accident levels are rising at these junctions.

The central junction, known to locals as the cemetery junction is situated just after a blind bend on the A90. With, already frustrated, drivers being held up crossing from the southern junction or commuters on the A90 annoyed at having to slow down to 50 for the southern junction, it is extremely common to find speeding motorists at this

point and crossing from this junction is hazardous to say the least. There is little time for the manoeuvre when a speeding vehicle appears at the bend.

This junction has a regular tailback of vehicles using it to turn south. I, myself, joined a queue of 7 vehicles waiting at this junction, one day and of the seven vehicles in front of me only one turned North. The rest, including myself crossed the carriageway to go south.

The northern junction is regularly congested with traffic also. Traffic turning from the North into Laurencekirk use this junction. One of the signposts in the central reservation is creating a blind spot of traffic on the A90 approaching from the south. This is also the junction that is preferred by local haulage firms and a large bus company based in Laurencekirk which means that buses and lorries are regularly crossing the North Junction to travel south. The bus company does not allow most of its buses to use the southern junction because of the conditions there.

According to Transport Scotland the accident level has fallen at the southern junction with “only” 3 minor accidents reported since the safety measures were installed in 2005. The previous three years “only” recorded 4 accidents with 8 casualties, 3 of which were serious, 4 slight and appallingly, 1 fatality.

Comparing this to the central and northern junctions, Since the safety measures were implemented there has been 10 accidents at these sites with 17 casualties, 5 were serious and 12 slight. Three years previous to the safety measures there were 6 accidents between both sites with 7 casualties, 5 serious and 2 slight.

Transport Scotland states that Bear Scotland carried out a study which was completed in 2008 but then superceded by the outcome of the STPR. It would be good to know what their study concluded, also they say that the STPR gave specific consideration to the case for the grade separation of the Laurencekirk/Montrose junction but was deemed unnecessary. I would like to know what this consideration was as it seems it could only have been looking at the accident report from the junction itself and with no observation or consideration of the actual stretch of road itself which only concludes to me that there was no “specific consideration” given at all. I find it incredible to believe that by looking at the overall picture that the STPR showed a grade separation at Laurencekirk to be “unnecessary”. I would also like to see the report from the AIP study that has been carried out at all 3 junctions at Laurencekirk and will be reported at the end of June. It could also be helpful to gain access to accident information of the B974 and smaller feeder roads of the area to the A90 to see if there has been a rise in accidents at these sites, also, since the safety measures were introduced.

These accident level figures surely prove the inadequacy of the safety measures implemented in 2005. Although the accident level has fallen at the A937/A90 montrose/Laurencekirk junction the problems have merely been pushed, both, North and South of the Junction itself.

I truly believe that we have an urgent need for the grade separation of the Montrose/Laurencekirk junction. There will be another fatality in this area it is only a matter of time.

I believe that the central junction and Northern junctions should be closed to crossing traffic and until such times as these measures are carried out the 50mph limit should cover the whole length of Laurencekirk covering all three junctions and extended further south than is in place at present

I believe that the Housebuilders of the areas between Laurencekirk and Montrose should contribute to the cost of a grade separated junction and there should be no further infrastructure of any kind at Laurencekirk until such times as work is implemented to build a grade separated junction.

I can never express the feeling of dread and fear that falls over thousands of drivers who cross this stretch of road daily and of those people who avoid the junction at all cost even if it add miles onto their journey.

The saddest thing is knowing that Laurencekirk has no safe exit or entrance onto the A90.

I thank you for taking the time to read this.

Jill Campbell