

PE1236/F

Dear Mr David

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to the response from Transport Scotland, which I have studied carefully.

I am dismayed with the findings of the driver behaviour study, the recommendations and in the whole manner it was carried out. It shows no more than an attempt to pull the wool over our eyes. The accepted recommendations will do absolutely nothing to prevent further accidents at the junctions, they do nothing to address the problems for emerging traffic at any of the junctions and in effect will do no more than throw money to the wind.

Once again, each junction has been separated when all three should be regarded jointly, as each has an impact on the other.

Of their recommendations:

Vehicle Activated Signage to be installed at the A90/B9120 and also the A90/A937 North Junction northbound only costing £20,000.

These are to warn drivers on the A90 that vehicles are emerging from the junctions. The review, itself, admits (9.1.5.5) that this provision may lose some effectiveness during peak times as the sometimes heavy right-turn flows may trigger the signs continuously but they say it would be possible to make the sign flash.

The Cross with Care sign opposite both legs at the A90/B9120 junction costing £500 is absolutely ineffective. The same signage is in place at the South Junction and has been for a number of years. They did not prevent the death of Jamie Graham in 2004 or the injury of many other drivers either.

Surface treatment measures on both A90 carriageways at the B9120 and A937 north junctions, costing £10,000 may improve skid resistance but will not prevent collisions.

Refresh road markings and replace existing studs with high visibility alternatives at all junctions, costing £5000, will do nothing and will be worn and torn out within a short time as vehicles continue to stack and heavy goods vehicles run over the top of them.

Upgrading and installing new signage costing £700, will do nothing to help

Cutting back shrubbery at the North Junction is only to make a sign more visible to traffic on the A90 and will do nothing to improve visibility at this site to emerging traffic.

We were given the grace of a study carried out over, only, 2 days and one of these days was a Saturday. This was not a long enough period to judge the full impact of the junctions.

The study reports that the surrounding area, with the exception of Laurencekirk is rural in nature and is generally used for agriculture. This may be true but it fails to observe that the south junction serves a main route for Montrose, Hillside, Craigo and Marykirk joining onto the A90. Montrose itself has a population of around 12,000. While Transport Scotland have already advised Aberdeenshire Council (3.7) that proposed expansion Of Laurencekirk of 885 dwellings and around 20 ha of employment would mean upgrading the junctions with grade separation and as

Transport Scotland has no plans to carry out these upgrades they would have to be developer funded.

No one is taking into account the expansion taking place on the A937 towards Montrose. Montrose harbour is getting busier as it is a cheaper site than Aberdeen Harbour. Angus Council has just announced a development masterplan within Forties Road Business Park which has been instrumental in securing Montrose its status as Scotlands second home for Oil and Gas. Halliburton, Merpro, ABB Vetco Gray and RGIT Montrose all have major operations there and with a new £1/2 million, 4 hectare extension providing development plots for incoming businesses is sure to attract more companies with its low cost location. There is also a large housing development ongoing within the town. A major grain store is also proposed for the town. All this development is bound to have a huge impact on the southern junction.

A90/A937 South Junction

The traffic survey report states that 17,825 movements occurred on Monday 11th May. The survey noted the stacking that occurs in the central reservation.

Reported accidents at this site from 2006 to 2008 are three injury and 7 damage only a total of 10 collisions

The report suggests that waiting time to cross is a maximum of 55 seconds. The survey fails to observe that with tailbacks of as much as 50 vehicles or more trying to cross the actual waiting times for drivers can be half an hour or more during peak periods.

Grampian Police suggest (8.1) that speed does not play a part in the collisions at this junction but careless manoeuvres by side road drivers who have become frustrated by the delays experienced due to the high Trunk Road traffic volume.

The survey recorded 15% of vehicles travelling southbound at greater speeds than 52 mph

A90/B9120 Middle Junction

The traffic survey report states that 16,650 movements occurred here on Monday 11th May. It observed stacking in the central reservations. It observed 15% of traffic travelling southbound in excess speeds of 74 mph The report admits that the southeast leg has a deceleration lane of 101.3m, the required standard is 110m. It admits that visibility to the south from this junction is restricted to 120m in comparison to the standard 295 m.

A90/A937 North Junction

The traffic survey report states that 17,853 movements occurred on Monday May 11th. It observed 15% of vehicle travelling Northbound at speeds greater than 77mph. It acknowledges the need for a northbound merge taper at this site.

The report also breaks down the number of accidents at each junction the timing of them, who lived where, and the attempted manoeuvres. It also costs out each accident. Lists out the upgrading options and justifies (poorly) why they should not carry out a grade separation. And, of course, it is all down to cost of building against the cost of our lives.

The construction of grade separation at the South Junction with gap closures at the other two will significantly reduce the accident levels at Laurencekirk.

I do not agree with the police when they say that they would not recommend reducing the speed level to 50mph to cover all three junctions. It worked at Forfar. If a 50mph limit had been in place at the North Junction in September this may also have saved Mr Anderson's life.

I would ask why the survey was carried out over 2 days only, one of which was a Saturday. What made them think this timescale would give them the full impact of the problems of these junctions

I would like to know what times of the day was the survey carried out e.g. 24 hour period, I would also like to know what percentage of traffic movements occurred during peak times i.e. 6.30 – 8.30 am and 4.00 – 6.30 pm.

I would like to know why they think that speed levels are ok when, at all three, junctions 15% of vehicles were recorded as travelling at above acceptable speed levels.

I would like to know why they think that their proposed recommendations will reduce the accident level as much as grade separation.

I would like to know the true cost per accident as the report costs each accident the same in 2008 as they were in 2005.

I would like to know why they refuse to take into consideration that each of these three junctions have an impact on the other and should be considered together.

I would like to know why at the middle junction (B9120) which has been the scene of many accidents involving emerging traffic, they accept a southbound visibility restricted to 120m. This is 175 metres less than the standard 295m. Gap closure at this junction should be recommended and not a warning sign.

I feel people's lives cannot be judged on graphs and charts (to err is human) and priority should be to save lives, not assume that because there were three accidents in 2007 that there will be three accidents in 2010 and this will be ok. Because none of them are ok.

In the report our lives have been measured against the cost of upgrading this stretch of road and what will give them the best rate of return.

We have asked for grade separation with gap closures as we know that this is the safest option for emerging traffic at all junctions and will save lives.

They say the cost of this is estimated at £4million and would give a first year return in accident reduction of 4.7%. They consider this unacceptable.

The report states that their proposed recommendations will reduce the accident level as much and would give them a first year return of 480.6%.

This is a ridiculous statement as their recommendations will make no difference whatsoever.

Setting aside all the graphs and charts (some of which were wrong) in the report and using their own costings, I calculated the full cost of injury accidents between 2005 and 2008. The cost was £2,374,797.00. If we take into account injury accidents in 2009 which I am currently waiting for the exact figure of from Grampian Police and knowing of the recent fatality, I would expect this cost to be much higher.

With the cost of grade separation being estimated at £4million, I would assume that a flyover built at the south junction and gap closures at the other two would pay itself back much more quickly than the report suggests.

I urge the committee not to accept these recommendations as I know that they will not reduce the accident level on this stretch of road and the potential risk of another fatality will be as high as ever.

I thank you for your time and effort in considering this campaign.

Jill Campbell

