

PE1236/N

Dear Sir

Firstly I would like to apologise to the committee for taking so long to respond to Transport Scotland's response.

I was very disappointed in the response from Transport Scotland as, once again, they have made no effort to answer the key issues raised by the petitions committee at the meeting on 18th May 2010.

Surely they could provide us with an outline cost of a flyover at Laurencekirk without too much additional cost "to the taxpayer". The transport minister was happy to brandish the figure of £20 million pounds knowing full well that this figure related to an isolated build at another site. He had no right to use this figure against a flyover built at Laurencekirk without knowing actual costing. I am quite sure the people of the area would welcome the knowledge of the cost of a flyover far more than we have welcomed the thousands of pounds that have been used on the recent "upgrades" carried out on the A90 at Laurencekirk. These upgrades, at representatives of Transport Scotland own admission, were put in place and would be of benefit to strangers to the area rather than local people and yet a majority of the accidents on this stretch of road, including all of the last five fatalities, have involved local people.

The accident figures they provided for the Keir Roundabout and Broxden Roundabout cannot be compared in relation to Laurencekirk as they include the 28 mile stretch of road between the two sites. This is not the figures that we asked for. I am not doubting the need for upgrades at these locations, however no comparison can be made with the figures they have provided. This has been a blatant attempt to belittle the accident level at Laurencekirk.

We raised our concerns about local development in the Montrose Area at the last petition committee meeting and they have responded with no firm answer to our questions. In turn they referred us back to the Transport Ministers remarks, made, to the petitions Committee meeting on 2 March 2010 regarding proposed developments at Laurencekirk, in which he said that should the 885 new homes be given the go ahead for the area then two grade separated junctions would have to be built at Laurencekirk and would have to be local council and developer funded. Again there is no clear answer here to the question raised.

In reference to the two deep water berths that are to be built at Montrose, where work was due to begin in June 2010 but has been delayed. These works have received £5 million of funding from Transport Scotland. The Transport Minister said that the Deep Water Berths will remove many lorries from the A90. If Transport Scotland are monitoring the situation at Laurencekirk so well why was it not picked up that many of these heavy lorries, coming from the North, going to the Deep Water Berths at Montrose, would have to pass right through the south junction at Laurencekirk. We have already proven that Lorries and Trailers cannot sit safely on the central reservation at this location.

There is also the following developments being considered

Angus Council has plans for 579 new homes in the Montrose area with 336 of these to be built before 2017 also a building opportunity in Hillside of 320 new homes

Aberdeenshire Council has plans for 885 new homes in Laurencekirk with 485 of these to be built before 2016

Expansion is planned at the Forties Industrial Estate in Montrose

A Grain Store is due to be built in Montrose (this development has received £3 million of funding by the Scottish Government)

An 11.0 ha site for employment is planned at Laurencekirk with a further 16 ha as a strategic reserve.

300 homes are planned in the former US Navy Base at Edzell Woods which is situated just a few miles south of Laurencekirk

All of these future developments planned for the area would have a huge and disastrous impact on the

junctions at Laurencekirk but the fact remains that the junctions and in particular the south junction is not coping with the volume of traffic using it now. The call for these junctions to be upgraded are now being backed by Angus Council Officials also.

Transport Scotland say they are working closely with both councils and continue to monitor the junctions at Laurencekirk. I find this extremely hard to believe.

I believe that Transport Scotland does recognise the need for grade separation at Laurencekirk and are waiting for Aberdeenshire Council and local developers to fund the cost of it, they have already said this.

The junctions at Laurencekirk are on the A90, part of Scotlands trunk road network and the responsibility for the safety of commuters on this stretch of road belongs to Transport Scotland, not local councils or developers. Sitting back, doing nothing and waiting for the two councils local development plans, so the buck can be passed is both arrogant and irresponsible. People are still being injured on this stretch of road and the potential of another fatality remains as high as ever.

I feel the overall response from Transport Scotland has been issued in ridicule towards ourselves and the Petitions Committee. They have once more quoted the same paragraphs from the STPR report and been, at best, vague with the accident figures we asked for. And shown no consideration for any of the developments being carried out at present or in the future. All this, only, proves how little consideration or effort they have given to any of the new questions raised and a total disregard for the safety of the people in the area.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge the Committee not to close this petition. There are thousands of people in the North East who are hoping that the Transport Minister will, finally, see sense and do the right thing by approving the grade separation of the south junction at Laurencekirk.

I thank you for your time in considering my response.

Yours faithfully

Jill Campbell