

PE1236/BB

Petitioner Letter of 5 March 2012

Dear Chris,

I would like the following to be considered by the committee.

I asked about the idea of a split level junction after it was suggested by John Dawson who is a former chief engineer of Scottish roads and current chair of the European roads assessment programme. This man has over 35 years' experience so I was quite sure he knew what he was talking about. He said that a split level junction was a far simpler and cheaper option and would cost in the region of a £1 million.

However according to Transport Scotland's response, they would have us believe that grade separation and split level junctions are one in the same and Aberdeenshire Council suggests differently so I am now confused as to what a split level junction actually is.

Once more Transport Scotland are making their position quite clear, they are not prepared to go any further with the junction.

In August of this year it will be 8 years since the original petition began. Eight years on and we are left with a short length of a main trunk road with a 50mph speed limit an absolute deluge of signage and, finally, a slipway at the North junction of Laurencekirk. This new measure will undoubtedly help traffic emerging from Laurencekirk travelling north. We have a huge amount of reports and documentation from Transport Scotland telling us why there is no need for grade separation at Laurencekirk. No doubt the cost of all this runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds. In all these years and all the safety measures carried out they have continued to ignore the real danger at Laurencekirk and that is to the crossing traffic at the south junction where the A937 crosses the A90.

They continue to discount any expansion within the Montrose Area and have even contributed millions of pounds on different projects e.g.: deep water berths and grain store with a reckless disregard to the impact these expansions may have to the A937, the A92 being not suitable for heavy haulage. In fact a local Montrose paper reported this week that "Business is booming" as the deep water berths harbour investment is attracting new clients. Companies that are basing themselves in Aberdeen and Montrose. I welcome these developments however they will eventually overwhelm the, already, over congested road and junction.

In the end it has all come down to the costing, Transport Scotland will say it is not viable due to the costing and there is no money for grade separation at Laurencekirk.

However, last week, Alex Neil pledged to loan Aberdeenshire Council £70 million for the Aberdeen City Garden Project. A worthwhile pledge? I am sure 45,000 people of Aberdeen believe so. Couldn't this idea have been adopted for the junction offering this type of loan to both Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils in order to improve safety and travelling time to commuters a project that will actually save lives.

Do Transport Scotland actually want a body count before they address the real problem because they are going to get one. It is just a matter of time. As John Dawson said on the recent TV programme about the road "one slip at this type of junction and you're dead". Travelling through the junction daily is frightening and frustrating for the most experienced drivers and it is only getting worse.

They say they are continuing to monitor the road. How do they do this? I don't believe they are or can.

I feel that the committee will probably close the campaign having exhausted all avenues and we no longer seem to have local MSP support to fight our corner. With this in mind I would just like to thank the committee for their efforts, understanding and all the support they have shown, over the years for our cause.

I thank you for your time in reading this.

Yours sincerely

Jill Fotheringham