

PE1236/NN

Petitioner Letter of 16 November 2012

Dear Sir,

I, once again, thank you for allowing me to make a submission to petition PE1236.

I have read through the Nestrans report and while I will not pretend to have understood it all, I did pick up on the following comments.

1. We have always been told that the settlement of Laurencekirk is not large enough in itself to warrant grade separation at the south junction and yet by 2008 the population of Laurencekirk had already exceeded the population that Newtonhill had in the early 1990s when it had a grade separated junction with the A90 built.
2. I would like to point out paragraph 3.12 in the Nestrans report which clearly states that with traffic 2 way flows exceeding 3,000 movements a day at the south junction and possibly the north junction also, grade separation could be recommended for both the south and north junctions according to the DMRB vol 6 section 2 - TA 23/81.
3. I noted excess speed limits being recorded at all three junctions, with 32% of recorded speeds southbound being in excess of 50mph. This figure is alarming.
4. On page 11. The comment about the 50mph limit. Which conflicts with the aim of minimising delays and improving journey times! I also note that this speed limit was put in place in July 2005 a temporary measure, transport Scotland tells us now that an order came into force revoking the Temporary 50mph speed limit order in November 2005 and will remain in force for the foreseeable future, any amendments to the junction would have to be in accordance with DMRB standards.

I would like to know the significance of the DMRB because it looks to me that it is followed to the letter in one hand and blatantly ignored in the other.

5. The Nestrans report states that Laurencekirk is expanding at a higher rate than the national average, a further 210 homes have already been granted planning permission. According to them the DMRB would suggest that grade separation is already warranted at the south junction and possibly the north junction also. They found "the use of national road traffic forecasts at a low growth rate surprising given the growth rates that have been observed on the A90 at Laurencekirk in the past. I assume this refers to previous studies and reports by Transport Scotland.

As for Transport Scotland's response I can only say that I am completely disgusted with it! They continue with their point that grade separation can only be developer funded! Whilst Nestrans report states that according to the DMRB, grade separation could be warranted now at the south junction. Transport Scotland say that the report demonstrates that grade separation is required at an even lower level of

development in Laurencekirk and will have to be developer funded but the way I read Nestrans report, grade separation is warranted now without any further development.

As for developments proposed within the Angus local development plan, I don't believe, for a second, that the south junction at Laurencekirk has, ever, been given any consideration. It certainly wasn't when Transport Scotland handed over millions of pounds to Montrose port authorities to enable two deep water berths to be put in place within Montrose harbour. I asked Transport Scotland at the time what research had been done on the impact this development would have on access roads, I was told that of the five access roads to the harbour three were examined, the A937 was not one of the three, as a result, upgrades were carried out on the A92 Arbroath road and the A935 Brechin road to accommodate the increase in HGVs. And only now, despite being the most direct and shortest route on single carriage way to join the A90 for vehicles travelling north of Montrose, both Tactran and Transport Scotland describe the A937 as not defined as a regionally significant a-class road. This is the most farcical statement they have made yet, they say that HGVs should be discouraged from using it in favour of travelling via A935 Brechin or on the A92 coast road via Stonehaven where the A90 can be joined via grade separated junctions.

The distance from Montrose to Laurencekirk is 10 miles, travelling to Brechin from Montrose is also 10 miles but Brechin is 10 miles south of Laurencekirk. Travelling the A92 to Stonehaven from Montrose is 23 miles of single carriageway. I spoke to a local haulier who told me that there is no way he would allow his lorries to travel north via Brechin as it would add unnecessary fuel costs and take graph time, some of his destinations can be to the like of Fordoun or Drumlithie and on these journeys he would not allow his lorries to use the coast route as they are then having to double back on themselves at Stonehaven. The idea of discouraging HGVs from using the A937 is ludicrous and impossible. A majority of commuters travelling to Aberdeen from Montrose use the A937 despite there being a signposted route via the A92 at the A937/A92 junction. Transport Scotland letter actually conflicts with itself, they state that HGVs should be discouraged to use the A937 to avoid congestion (perhaps this should be extended to cars and vans also because the congestion at the junction during peak times is already overwhelming) and instead use longer and more awkward routes where they can join the A90 more safely via grade separated junctions, but, yet, they say that grade separation is not required at Laurencekirk for now. Nestrans report, if I have read their comments correctly, actually suggests that there is a need for grade separation now. As for Tactran, well they just don't care what is going on outwith Angus.

I now firmly believe, more than ever that Transport Scotland already know that grade separation needs to be done at the south junction at Laurencekirk, they just don't want to have to fund it and therefore have used the Laurencekirk plan to lay the cost directly with developers. I believe they have been, more than, reckless in assuming that any developments in Montrose would not have a major impact on the junction. I

also think they have used, diluted, future growth reports. Nestrans report says that the accident level at the junction is as high as ever only the severity of injuries has gone down, for this I am so grateful but has it really got to take a fatality for transport Scotland to take action or would they find a way out even then.

I think Transport Scotland should explain to the committee, properly, why Nestrans report differs from their own previous reports and in particular on the number of movements, of traffic, if the DMRB suggests that movements of traffic of 3,000 plus could warrant an alternate junction type. Why has this not even been considered.

I once again thank you for allowing my submission.

Jill Fotheringham