

PE1236/00

16th November, 2012

Scottish Parliament
Petitions Committee
Edinburgh
Attn. Chris Hynd Esq.

Dear Sir,

re: Petition PE1236

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to make a few points with regard to the provision of a grade separated interchange at the Southern junction of the A937 and A90 at Laurencekirk.

The junction is not only used by commuting traffic from the coastal towns of Angus – which are growing year on year – and Heavy Goods traffic from the growing port in Montrose, but it is also in the middle of a large agricultural area, and therefore has a very heavy usage by farm vehicles. These tractor and trailer combinations can be at least as long as a full-size articulated vehicle, and considerably slower and less agile.

It is extremely difficult for these vehicles to fit themselves completely within the area of the central refuge, and they are also slower when pulling out. On many occasions I have witnessed tractors with trailers pulling into the overtaking lane, forcing traffic already on the A90 to overtake on the nearside until such time as the tractor has achieved its maximum speed, and a gap occurs on the nearside lane allowing it to pull across fully.

As well as being very dangerous due to their bulk and low speeds, these vehicles also take a lot longer to find a gap in the traffic big enough for them to get safely over each carriageway. This means additional delays for the vehicles queuing behind them on the A937, which in turn raises tempers and tempts drivers to “treble stack” in the central refuge, and take other chances all in the hope of regaining some of the time lost.

I am aware that Tactrans have adopted a “not my problem” attitude to this situation, but despite any signposting that they may choose to do, it is a fact that the vast majority of the commuter traffic from Montrose and the coastal towns South of there use the A937. The coast road is slow and winding, with very few overtaking opportunities and I know nobody who drives up from this area to Aberdeen who uses the A92. To say that the A937 is not a “significant A” road is, at best, specious, and at worst a deliberate attempt at deception to support their expenditure on the Montrose to Brechin road. Before I retired recently, I dealt with several transport companies, and none of them would allow their drivers to waste tacograph time by either going on the A92 or driving to Aberdeen via Brechin.

The junction at the North end of Laurencekirk has been significantly improved recently by the addition of a long acceleration lane, allowing joining traffic to accelerate safely to the same speed as traffic already on the A90. However, at the South junction traffic going North from the A937 has to go straight onto the main carriageway at the point where Northbound traffic, having by that time cleared the speed camera, is ALREADY accelerating. I believe that records show 32% of traffic passes these cameras at over 50mph. This figure would, I am convinced, rise to significantly over 50% were the speeds

to be measured 100 metres after the end of the cameras' range.

Transport Scotland maintain that any works at this junction must be “developer funded”, and yet the traffic flows have already been shown in the comprehensive and clear Nestrans report to have been in excess of their guidelines for some years. Are we to assume that they wish to retrospectively make a charge against earlier developers? However this is a smokescreen as the traffic at this junction is predominantly joining the A90 from the South, not going into or from Laurencekirk. The developments responsible for the dangers are those in Angus, and I find it hard to see any way in which the developers there can be charged for a G.S.I. at Laurencekirk. Please can someone make Transport Scotland get a grip on the reality of this situation, rather than choosing to see only their costs involved. Sooner or later, and with or without any further development in Laurencekirk, there will be more fatalities at this junction, and we MUST do all in our power to stop this situation going on any longer.

I apologise for being rather longer than I intended, but I hope that these comments will explain to the committee some of the fears and frustrations of the local inhabitants – and those like myself, who have to use this junction on a daily basis.

Yours faithfully,

Charles Gordon