

## **PE1236/PP**

Dear Sirs,

As Laurencekirk Development Trust we wish to add this statement in support of Jill Fotheringham's Petition PE1236.

### **A90/A937 FLYOVER AT LAURENCEKIRK**

Representing Laurencekirk Development Trust we attended the recent DTA Scotland forum addressed by Alex Neil. The Q&A session revealed many cases where the intended outcome was blocked or frustrated by some missing or failed action between government agencies. He invited us to write in with details of such cases.

At Laurencekirk we have a longstanding case concerning the need for a flyover to cross the A90 at A937 to Montrose.

When the A90 was dualled 30 years ago, the road bypassed the town without a flyover. This was common economic practice at that time. However, since then grade separated junctions have been retrofitted all along A90, but inexplicably not at Laurencekirk.

Bypassing to the east created an obstacle between the old market town and 75% of the traditional area that it served including school catchment. Meanwhile populations and school rolls have doubled, are still rising, with a new academy in build. Equally the traffic flow on A90 has also doubled to the risk level of today.

In the past year we have quantified, in detail, the current risks of crossing the A90. We see the worst case is that every school day 22 buses loaded with our children are obliged to cross all four lanes. Because there is no flyover, the safety of these children relies on the patience and skills of our local school bus drivers. A single flyover will remove this serious hazard.

Laurencekirk is strategically well placed, as is reflected in the approved Local Development Plan which agrees the need for two flyovers. The plan also expects the local population to double again over 15 years.

However the start of the development is stalled. There is a lack of confidence as to when the key first flyover will be built.

Apparently, Transport Scotland attaches no priority to it, even in their ten year plan. In consequence nothing is happening because developers need to see the government commitment to the first south flyover.

Developers recognise the need for a second north flyover and expect to be funding this from sales. There are not enough houses to fund both flyovers. Meanwhile, developers are finding that potential incomers are put off by the hazardous A90 access and no expectation of a flyover coming. Developers plan, and expect to fund, a new road to the west to access land and create a heavy traffic relief road connected to the flyovers. This will divert HGVs and buses from the 18th century High Street improving access and small business opportunities.

This A90 crossing is not simply a problem for Laurencekirk residents but extends to the traditional catchment area to the coast of South Aberdeenshire and North Angus. Significant numbers of residents, old and young would naturally wish to use the excellent long established amenities and services of Laurencekirk. They are deterred by fear of crossing A90 which is seen as an obstacle best avoided and they go elsewhere, even if it is uneconomic.

Montrose impacts on the A937/A90 junction because the development of the harbour and oil related industries generates its own heavy transport, mostly to and from Aberdeen. This junction is the shortest route. The same oil connection sees significant commuter traffic at this junction from early morning and evening, as quantified in petition PE1236.

It seems that all parties are agreed as to the need for this flyover. Local people and businesses, local government, MSPs and Transport Scotland, but no priority is visible. This is a major deterrent for developers and investors.

Last year, Transport Scotland produced an excellent study confirming the local road crossing needs at Laurencekirk. From this we see that the raw cost of one flyover is £5.4 million which becomes £10.7 million with all the various contingencies.

Given that most recent road infrastructure projects in Scotland have finished under budget, less than £10 million would solve both problems. The very high risk and stalled development.

We hope to have illustrated that this present situation is indeed a case where all government agencies are agreed, but no progress is evident. We would appreciate your intervention to resolve this.

David Young  
Laurencekirk Development Trust