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Fergus D Cochrane
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
TG01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Your ref:
PE1236

Our ref:
C1468667

30 December 2009

Dear Mr Cochrane

Consideration of Petition PE1236

Thank you for your letter of 2 December about Petition PE1236 concerning the Laurencekirk junctions of the A90 trunk road. I have set out below our responses to Jill Campbell's questions.

The STPR appraisal process gave specific consideration to the case for the grade separation of the Laurencekirk / Marykirk junction. Further to the road safety measures introduced in 2005 (and the further measures in October 2007 and late 2008), which resulted in improved accident statistics at this location, it was not considered that grade separation was necessary at this time. However, the safety record at Laurencekirk will continue to be monitored and will be used to inform our consideration of whether further mitigation measures may be required.

With regard to the cost of providing a grade separation at Laurencekirk, I refer to the response of the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change to Parliamentary Question S3O-082 on 8 October:

S3O-8082 - Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD) (Date Lodged Thursday, October 08, 2009): *whether it will estimate the cost of building a grade-separated junction on the A90 at Laurencekirk.*

Answered by Stewart Stevenson (Thursday, October 08, 2009): *The member will know from my response to his recent written question, S3W-27346, that to estimate the cost of any such junction requires thorough investigation and design. As there are no current plans to construct a grade separated junction at Laurencekirk, no detailed cost information is available. However, a grade separated junction with a dual carriageway such as the A90 is typically in the range £4.3 million to £22 million (2002-03 prices).*

Quoting a single (unadjusted) figure represents the situation inaccurately. The petition also requests the closure of two junctions at this location. This would add to the costs involved, including extra costs due to knock on effects on routes adjacent to those proposed for closure. It will not be possible to determine the cost of a junction and any proposed changes at Laurencekirk until detailed design work has been developed. As detailed above this is not currently recommended.

Transport Scotland commissioned the A90 Laurencekirk Safety Review which reported in October 2009. This was carried out in recognition of the injury accidents with the specific aim of investigating the Laurencekirk junctions and recommending effective measures specifically designed to address any identified issues and reduce the number and severity of accidents.

Turning to Ms Campbell's specific questions:

1 No one is taking into account the expansion taking place on the A937 towards Montrose.

As a statutory consultee within the planning process Transport Scotland is given the opportunity to consider the safe performance of the trunk road network in relation to the potential effects of development plan proposals and at that time make recommendations and specify conditions as part of an official planning response.

2 Why was the survey carried out over 2 days one of which was a Saturday?

The survey methodology was based on industry best practice, covering a typical weekday and weekend period to record the differing volumes and patterns during these periods.

3 What times of the day was the survey carried out?

Traffic counts were taken over a 12-hour period, 7am – 7pm.

4 Why they think that speed levels are ok when, at all three junctions 15% of vehicles are recorded as travelling at above acceptable levels?

The speed measurement and the statistical analysis of these figures are used for information in assessing which measures are to be recommended to reduce the accident rate.

5 Why they think that their proposed recommendations will reduce the accident level as much as grade separation?

The measures recommended have been installed on other locations and demonstrated to have a positive effect in reducing accidents. As Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) measures, they are not assessed against the performance of a grade separated junction.

6 What is the true cost per accident?

Individual accident costs vary and therefore average figures are used in the analysis. These are published annually in *Reported Road Casualties* and these vary each year. This is available on the Scottish Government website at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/23103624/0

7. Why they refuse to take into account consideration that each of these three junctions impact on each other and should they be considered together?

The accident prevention measures recommended for each location have been assessed based on the accident information and observations at each location. However, they are not considered in isolation as they were assessed within the same report, while the measures recommended are consistent with those used elsewhere.

8 Why they accept the southbound visibility restricted to 120m at the middle junction (B9120)?

The visibility at this junction is restricted due to the geometry of the existing road layouts.


9 Why is gap Closure at the junction of the A90 and B9120 not recommended and not a warning sign?

Closure of the central reserve gap would require substantial network analysis to determine the impact on surrounding junctions. This closure itself may create a source of conflict as it would alter the traffic patterns in and around Laurencekirk. Such a proposal would require the support of Aberdeenshire Council and Grampian Police. This option has been suggested by neither.

The recommendations of the A90 Laurencekirk Safety Review have been accepted with the necessary designs currently underway. The installation of these measures will be carried out as soon as practicable.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

DAVID MIDDLETON

