

Annex B

From: [Redacted] on behalf of [Minister for Transport TS](#)
To: [Corporate Correspondence Support Team](#) FW:
Subject: Laurencekirk Junction
Date: 03 March 2022 09:36:23
Importance: High

Hi,
MR please.
Thanks,
[Redacted].

From: [Redacted]<[Redacted]@Parliament.scot> **On Behalf Of** Gilruth J (Jenny), MSP
Sent: 03 March 2022 09:20
To: Minister for Transport <MinisterFT@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Laurencekirk Junction
Importance: High

From: Gougeon M (Mairi), MSP <Mairi.Gougeon.msp@parliament.scot>
Sent: 03 March 2022 09:10
To: MinisterFT@gov.scot
Cc: Gilruth J (Jenny), MSP <Jenny.Gilruth.msp@parliament.scot>
Subject: Laurencekirk Junction
Importance: High

Dear Jenny,

I have been made aware of the below post by Councillor George Carr on the Laurencekirk Junction campaign facebook page, which I also wanted to make you aware of so that I can clarify the current situation with the junction and funding of it.

The campaign for a junction has been ongoing for a significant period of time, led by local campaigner [Redacted]. [Redacted] and I met with the previous Transport Minister last year to discuss progress, it was made clear at that meeting that the Scottish Government was looking to progress this as quickly as possible, however the objections to the scheme were the main barrier to this. I want to ensure that my constituents have the facts of this situation and would welcome clarification on the assertions made below. I look forward to working with you in delivering this vital road safety improvement for my constituency.

Kindest Regards,

Mairi

Dear All

Cllrs are well aware of the anger being experienced at the delays to the junction – a junction which should have been delivered 15 years ago by a Labour/Lib Scottish Executive.

If you have attended Mearns Community Council, as I do every month, the junction always features on the agenda and we continue to explore different avenues to keep momentum going. The Scottish Government has refused to deliver a junction at every opportunity, saying the "criteria was never met". I can't tell you how angry we feel, that every avenue we have pursued so far has been met with a brick wall.

The Laurencekirk junction as planned is only going ahead due to Aberdeen City Deal, funding by the UK Government. The Scottish Government has to match funding for that project. We now need to know whether it will be a new road, or a new bridge at Oatyhill to maintain access for residents and businesses who would be adversely impacted by the project as it is currently envisaged.

We also lobbied the Scottish Government to help us to replace the ageing bridges which were coming to the end of their life – again to no avail.

Cllrs and Mearns Community Council campaigned for a solution for the issues affecting our Mearns road and rail bridges. The Aberdeenshire Council Administration introduced an infrastructure fund which enabled us to create a prioritisation list of bridges for Aberdeenshire. The £40m fund was subsequently agreed by Aberdeenshire Council at the Infrastructure Services Committee in November. This fund will allow us to finance these vital projects.

You may recall I had the Council Leader, [Redacted], down to both Abbeyton and Oatyhill to see the problem first hand in 2020. MSP Tess White and MP Andrew Bowie joined me last month for an update on the situation in the Mearns.

It has been a joint effort between ourselves and Andrew Bowie MP to ensure Network Rail have the capacity to replace Abbeyton Bridge – using Council funding. I can't tell you how much work and effort has been put in so far, working with Council Officers, the Council Leader, MPs, MSPs and colleagues to get us to this point. Oatyhill bridge is now top of the Council bridge prioritisation list followed by Abbeyton for replacement!.

Agreeing Abbeyton and Oatyhill Council funding should make the decision easier on how to maintain access to properties following the construction of the new Laurencekirk flyover. Aberdeenshire Council has completed it's work on access but rightly (on behalf of affected residents) still has a pending objection to ensure access rights are protected in any future solution when the junction layout is agreed. No one wants to lose access to their property and access rights of course are enshrined in Scots Law.

Laurencekirk flyover is currently sitting with the new Transport Minister in the Scottish Government. Aberdeenshire Council has been informed that a delay in reaching a decision is because the new Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP, has just taken up the reins from her predecessor Graeme Dey MSP.

The objection by Aberdeenshire Council, and others is no reason to delay this project! Transport Scotland, which is tasked with delivering this project on behalf of the Scottish Government, has the statutory powers at their disposal to resolve any outstanding issues or objection via a public enquiry, or they can decide the best option to deliver the project which addresses the access objections, and they are withdrawn.

Either way these are options available to the Scottish Government and we await their decision on how they intend to take this vital project forward. Tess White MSP is pursuing this in the Scottish Parliament.

I hope this explains the current background to this project and decisions need to be taken swiftly as we have all waited long enough.

Best regards

George

Cllr George Carr

Aberdeenshire Council

Mearns Ward

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Mairi Gougeon MSP
Mairi.Gougeon.msp@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202200286176
Your Reference: Laurencekirk Junction

12 April 2022

Dear Mairi

A90/A937 Laurencekirk Junction

Thank you for your email of 3 March 2022. I can confirm that the Scottish Government remains committed to delivering the A90/A937 Laurencekirk Junction Improvement as soon as possible.

As you will be aware, following publication of draft Orders for the Scheme Transport Scotland received four objections to the proposed junction improvement including one from Aberdeenshire Council. Transport Scotland continues to actively work with objectors to resolve their concerns where possible and continues to make positive progress in this regard.

I can confirm that Aberdeenshire Council and other key stakeholders continue to meet regularly with Transport Scotland as part of an ongoing partnership working approach as scheme development continues. Assessment work to identify the most appropriate solution to the Oatyhill Bridge issue is now approaching conclusion and further progress on this issue is expected in the coming months. In the meantime Aberdeenshire Council's objection to the scheme remains in place, which is disappointing. This objection is creating another barrier to progress at the site, which I recognise will be frustrating for your constituents – it is, however, as you will know, ultimately a matter for Aberdeenshire Council.

As you will be aware, should Transport Scotland be unsuccessful in removing all objections then a Public Local Inquiry may be required. As with all trunk road projects this is the appropriate forum for considering objections received and not withdrawn.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



Delivery of the scheme itself can only commence if it is approved under the relevant statutory procedures, at which point a timetable for its progress can be set. As previously confirmed in Transport Scotland's letter of 25 October 2021 under reference 202100248469, funding for the scheme forms part of a package of additional investment alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

I hope this is of assistance.

Best wishes

[Redacted]
JENNY GILRUTH

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



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From: [Redacted]on behalf of [Minister for Transport TS](#)
To: [Corporate Correspondence Support Team](#) RE:
Subject: Laurencekirk junction
Date: 04 March 2022 10:23:28
Attachments: [FW Laurencekirk Junction.msg](#)

Hi,

I assume both this OR and the attached MR are probably being dealt with by the same person/team? Can you please ask that these responses are fast-tracked and that PO is notified (email or Teams) when the responses are ready.

Ms Gilruth is keen to see these asap.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]<[Redacted]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of Minister for Transport
Sent: 03 March 2022 10:25
To: TS Corporate Correspondence Support Team <TSS@transport.gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Laurencekirk junction

Hi,

OR please.

Thanks,
[Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]@btinternet.com <[Redacted]@btinternet.com>
Sent: 03 March 2022 10:16
To: Minister for Transport <MinisterFT@gov.scot>
Subject: Laurencekirk junction

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on your appointment as Transport Minister.

You will have been made aware of the long wait for a safe junction across the A90 at Laurencekirk (A937).

Recently I have seen comments published locally that the current delay in progress is due to the change in Transport Minister.

I am sure that is not the case.

Please could you assure me that steps are being taken towards the Laurencekirk junction and that progress will be seen very soon.

It would be helpful if clarity could be given about what those next steps are and the likely timeline.

Thank you
Best regards

[Redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

[Redacted]

Your ref:
Laurencekirk
Junction

Our ref:
202200286791

Date:
24 March 2022

Dear [Redacted]
A90/A937 Laurencekirk Junction

Thank you for your email of 3 March 2022 addressed to the Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP. I have been asked to reply as Project Administrator for the A90/A937 Laurencekirk Junction Improvement Scheme.

I can confirm that the Scottish Government remains committed to delivering a grade separated junction at Laurencekirk as part of a package of additional investment alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

Following publication of draft Orders in December 2019 Transport Scotland received a number of objections to the proposed junction improvement scheme and we continue to work with objectors to the scheme with a view to resolving their concerns. Should we be unsuccessful in removing all objections a public local inquiry may be required. As with all trunk road projects this is the appropriate forum for considering objections received and not withdrawn.

Although a lot of essential work remains to be undertaken, we will continue to push forward the preparation stages to deliver this scheme as soon as possible. Delivery of the scheme itself can only commence if it is approved under the relevant statutory procedures, at which point a timetable for the construction phase can be determined.

Once complete, the scheme will bring improved road safety and economic benefits to road users and the local community in Laurencekirk and across the north east.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely
[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Project Administrator, Major Projects