

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **Environment, Planning and Infrastructure**

DATE: **13 September 2011**

DIRECTOR: **Gordon McIntosh**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Proposal to introduce a prohibition of driving - Pitmedden Road, Dyce**

REPORT NUMBER: **EPI/11/195**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Committee of the results of the initial statutory consultation process undertaken following the decision of the Committee to revert to the original proposal to introduce a prohibition of driving on the section of Pitmedden Road serving Dyce Caravans and other properties (thereby closing this section of road to through traffic).

To request officers to explore the alternative options, such as the introduction of prohibition of left turn at peak times and closure to all vehicles except farm vehicles.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

1. Acknowledges there are concerned parties that wish to maintain the option to utilise both junctions associated with this section of Pitmedden Road.
2. Thereby instructs officers not to progress the Traffic Regulation Order further.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as the recommendation is not to advance this proposal.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There is a link to the Single Outcome Agreement "...to live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need."

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 At the Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee on 9 November 2010, consideration was given to the comments / objections received as a result of the public consultation over the proposal to introduce a prohibition of left turns for vehicular traffic exiting the section of Pitmedden Road serving Dyce Caravans and other properties, on to the section of Pitmedden Road between Dyce Drive and Victoria Street.
- 5.2 To set the background, concerns had been raised relating to the volume of traffic and road safety on this section of Pitmedden Road. A number of drivers in the late afternoon / evening weekday peak use the road to avoid the queue of vehicles on Dyce Drive as drivers wait to gain access to the A947. The road safety concerns relate to reports that on occasion eastbound drivers intending to turn right at the junction, when confronted by the queue of vehicles waiting to turn left, will cross the 'double white' centre line and drive round the blind bend, immediately prior to the railway bridge, to pass the queue and thereby reach the junction to turn right. This practice thereby raising concern over the potential for a 'head on' collision.
- 5.3 With regard to the volume of traffic using the road during the late afternoon / evening peak period, a survey between 4.45pm and 5.45pm indicated 90 vehicles turned left at the junction whilst 81 vehicles turned right. The average length of the queue during this time was to a point 20 meters west of the railway bridge. Whilst officers did not observe vehicles overtaking prior to the bridge, a large number of vehicles did overtake just after passing the bridge, where the drivers would have a clear view of the junction. The concern over this practice being the occasion where a driver of a westbound vehicle, where the driver has just turned into this section of Pitmedden Road, has to slow down or stop to allow the eastbound vehicle to reach the 'Give way' lines.
- 5.4 A survey of collision data collected by Grampian Police for the six year period from January 2005 to December 2010 indicated there have been no recorded collisions as a result of driver passing the queue after the bridge to turn right. Likewise there are no recorded collisions in the immediate vicinity of the bend / railway bridge where the causation factor was a result of a driver overtaking.
- 5.5 In terms of possible traffic management options that could resolve the issue, a prohibition of driving was first suggested. This would effectively close the road to through traffic by closing a section of the road and implementing physical barriers at points either side of the railway bridge. Such a prohibition would require an 'except for access' exemption as Network Rail would still require access to maintain the railway bridge and there is also an adjacent field area used by the farmer. Consequentially, it would be necessary to provide these parties, as well as the emergency services, with a key to open the gates that would control access. The costs of installing the necessary barriers and associated signs would be in the region of £4K. (For reference a plan indicating the extent of this proposal is included at the end of this report)
- 5.6 However, an alternative suggestion was for a prohibition of left turns at the junction which would then stop the motorists seeking to gain access to the A947 from using the route. It was this suggestion that officers were instructed to progress by the Committee on 20 April 2010.

5.7 On paper, the suggestion for a prohibition of left turns could appear ideal, but in practice was fraught with problems. Such a restriction would be effective only to the extent of adequate enforcement, and it had to be acknowledged that Grampian Police would not have the resources to sustain the necessary level of enforcement on a day-to-day basis. It would also inconvenience vehicles visiting Dyce Caravans, as the vast majority when leaving this business premise would turn left at this junction. Indeed, there were four objections to this proposal from residents / proprietors on this road who indicated that a prohibition of left turns would be both ineffectual and inconvenient. On this basis, the Committee on 9 November 2010, resolved:

- (i) to approve the recommendation that a prohibition of left turns is likely to be ineffectual.
- (ii) to request officers to explore the alternative options, such as the introduction of a prohibition of left turn at peak times, and closure to all vehicles except farm vehicles.
- (iii) to the possibility of introducing a prohibition of driving on the road and instructed officers to carry out the preliminary stage of the statutory consultation, but also to consult with residents / proprietors on the road. The parties consulted appear in Table 1 which is appended to this report.

5.8 In response to the preliminary consultation there have been significant negative comments / objections received over the proposal to introduce a prohibition of driving. Firstly, when considering properties on the road, owners / proprietors highlight such a restriction would cause them inconvenience and raise safety concerns over turning right at the west junction of this road with Dyce Drive where the National Speed Limit (60mph) is in place. Secondly, the Dyce Service 80 shuttle bus linking the airport / industrial estate to the railway station operates on this road, turning right at the junction in question. The concern being raised that should the bus have to join the significant queues on Dyce Drive there could be significant time added to the journey perhaps necessitating a review of the timetable and route. It has also been indicated such a change may even affect the viability of the route.

5.9 When considering the properties to the west of the railway bridge, where residents / proprietors / stakeholders would be restricted to using the west junction with Dyce Drive, all have raised concerns / objections to this proposal. Mr Douglas Cumming both resides on this section of road at Parkview and, as part of a family farming partnership, is involved in running the farm steading at Nether Kirkton. Mr Cumming has indicated during the farm working day, especially during winter and spring, silage bales and feeds need to be transported to nearby fields. With slow moving farm tractors and trailers being used to transport such, Mr Cumming has a distinct preference to gain access to surrounding fields by way of the east junction (where he turns left) to exit Pitmedden Road. The speed limit at the location of the east junction is 40mph and in view of the slow moving vehicle and trailer, Mr Cumming is of the opinion this junction offers a safer alternative than having to turn right at the Dyce Drive junction to the west where the National Speed Limit is in place.

- 5.10 Mr Alan Cumming, who is a part owner of the Nether Kirkton Farm has also objected on the same grounds as is father Mr Douglas Cumming, stating “As a working farmer conscious of animal welfare and land management it is imperative that I have freedom to access the land and livestock totally unhindered with access to all roads and field entrances.”
- 5.11 Similarly Mr & Mrs William McGillivray, Kirton Villa, have also objected, as again, they choose to exit the road via the east junction when accessing Dyce, preferring to avoid the right turn at the junction with Dyce Drive. Another resident has expressed concern over the inconvenience this prohibition will cause for neighbours and the expense to the public purse of implementing such measures. Albeit, this same resident is in favour of any measures that would make the road safer and states “...a complete closure of the road except for access would achieve that...”
- 5.12 These residents to the west of Railway Bridge do express disappointment with the volume of vehicles using the road during the late afternoon / evening peak period and also concern over the speed of some of these vehicles. Indeed, one of the residents raised the question as to whether a prohibition of driving with an ‘except for access’ option could be introduced, however such a prohibition by signs alone, for the same reason as the previously suggested ‘left turn’ prohibition, would be ineffectual. Importantly, a number of these residents highlight, that whilst the volume and speed of traffic is a concern, they appreciate the access options the road provides as a through route. Some questioning whether a limited peak period really warrants closing a road to through traffic throughout the rest of the week.
- 5.13 With regard to the road being part of Dyce Service 80 Shuttle Bus route, NESTRANS, the regional transport partnership for Aberdeen City & Shire, have lodged a formal objection, whilst the Council Public Transport Team have also expressed concern. Within the letter on behalf of NESTRANS the following is stated “The current proposal would necessitate a change of route for the shuttle bus and could add up to ten minutes on journey times, requiring a review of the timetable, the route and possibly affecting the viability of the service. The shuttle bus has proved successful, enabling the link between the airport, heliport and Kirkhill Industrial Estate to the railway station, but timings are critical to the success of the service, with links to train schedules being the key factor. Last year, over fifty thousand trips were made and such a closure would have a huge impact on these customers.”
- 5.14 Should this proposal proceed to public advertisement there is the possibility the bus operator could object. In this event, under “The Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 1999” it would be necessary for the Council to hold a public hearing. Such a hearing requires the appointment of a reporter and any person who has objected to the proposal is afforded the opportunity of being heard at the hearing in support of their objection. Furthermore, notice of the hearing must be published in a local newspaper and any person so interested may, whether or not they propose to appear at the hearing, send written representations for the consideration of the reporter at the hearing. This particular scenario is of note as it would result in a considerable escalation of the costs and time involved in bringing this proposal to a conclusion.

- 5.15 In terms of support for this proposal, Grampian Police acknowledge there will be inconsiderate and at times dangerous actions attributed to drivers using this route and state "...we always advocate self policing solutions, and welcome your proposals for Old Pitmedden Road." Whilst in previous correspondence, during the consultation on a possible prohibition of left turns, Burnett & Reid Solicitors, acting on behalf of their client Dyce Caravans Limited and Mr Alistair Cumming, urged the Committee to revert to the prohibition of driving proposal.
- 5.16 Looking to the future, a significant factor to consider is the possible construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. This road would bring significant benefits, with traffic volume predicted to reduce by 14% on the A947 at the River Don. In turn, queues of traffic would be reduced and the traffic flow generally improved. Consequentially, it is expected this section of Pitmedden Road would no longer attract as many drivers and the current issues would be substantially mitigated or resolved.
- 5.17 Given the above, it is recommended the Committee instructs officers to suspend any further action with regard to progressing to a full public advertisement of this proposal.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The City Challenges in the Community Plan ("Getting Involved" and "Being Informed") yield clear links with the subject matter of this report.
- 6.2 Consultation with local residents, businesses and Community Councils links to National Outcome 11 of the Single Outcome Agreement relating to community engagement.
- 6.3 These proposals will be of interest to the residents/proprietors on the affected road, and also commuters who use the road.
- 6.4 There are links to the Single Outcome Agreement in terms of living life free of crime, disorder and danger and to live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 "Various, Small Scale Traffic Management and Development Associated Proposals (New Works)" Report and associated minute - Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee, 12 January 2010
- 7.2 "Prohibition of Driving, Old Pitmedden Road" Report and associated minute - Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee, 20 April 2010
- 7.3 The Aberdeen City Council (Pitmedden Road, Dyce, Aberdeen) (Prohibition of Left Turns) Order 2010 and associated minute - Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee, 9 November 2010

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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COMMENTS FOLLOWING CIRCULATION OF DRAFT REPORT

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee

Convener: Councillor Kate Dean has been consulted.
Vice Convenor: Councillor John Corall has been consulted.

Local Members

Councillor Barney Crockett has been consulted.
Councillor George Penny has been consulted.
Councillor John Corall has been consulted.
Councillor Mark McDonald has been consulted.

Council Officers

Barry Jenkins, Head of Finance, has been consulted and has no comments.
Jane MacEachran, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, has been consulted.
Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive has been consulted .
Gordon McIntosh, Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure has been consulted.
Hugh Murdoch, Head of Asset Management and Operations, has been consulted.
Margaret Bochel, Head of Planning & Sustainable Development, has been consulted and agrees with recommendations.
Mike Cheyne, General Manager, Operations, has been consulted.
Margaret Jane Cardno, Community Safety Manager has been consulted.
Dave Young, Account Manager, has been consulted.
Kathryn McFarlane, Service Co-ordinator
Allison Swanson, Committee Services Officer

Table 1

Initial Statutory Consultation

<u>Consultee</u>	<u>Response</u>
Grampian Police	"...we always advocate self policing solutions, and welcome your proposals for Old Pitmedden Road."
Freight Transport Association	No response.
Scottish Ambulance Service	No response.
Stagecoach Bluebird	No response.
Public Transport Unit	"To add ten to fifteen minutes to the journey time to this service would represent an increase of between 30 and 50 percent, making this service far less attractive to users, potentially having a strong negative effect on the patronage. Given the level of investment from Aberdeen City Council and NESTRANS it would be very disappointing to see these efforts dashed by the closure of such a vital link road."
The Access Panel	No response.
Grampian Fire & Rescue Service	"This closure has been investigated by one of our officers and he has no objection to this plan. Access to the area will still be possible from Dyce Drive/Pitmedden Road at either side of the closed road. As I can see no reason for there being a substantial delay in appliances reaching the area due to this closure, I offer no objection to the proposal."
First Aberdeen Ltd	No response.
RAC Foundation	No response.
Federation of Small Businesses	No response.
Road Haulage Association	No response.
Aberdeen Cycle Forum	No response.
Cyclist Touring Club	No response.

<u>Consultee</u>	<u>Response</u>
Dyce & Stoneywood Community Council	“The only comment I have to make is that the closure of this section of the road will be an inconvenience to the farmer, Mr D Cumming, as regards the feeding of his sheep, as some of the fields are on the other side of Dyce Drive. The problem is negotiating his farm vehicles on to Dyce Drive...as the speed of traffic is quite considerable.”
NESTRANS	“The current proposal would necessitate a change of route for the shuttle bus and could add up to ten minutes on journey times, requiring a review of the timetable, the route and possibly affecting the viability of the service.”
Network Rail	No response.
British Airports Authority	No response.
Central Coaches Aberdeen Ltd	No response.
Parkview / Nether Kirkton	<p>“...especially in the morning the Dyce Caravans exit provides a safe passage to Dyce or points east. In the morning an exit to Dyce from the west end and to the right with safety is almost impossible – it is a 60mph limit road with usual non-observing drivers and more especially motorbikes. No safe exit to Dyce for residents is left if barriers are installed.”</p> <p>“With current financial constraints suitable measures such as speed bumps and lane provision are unlikely but the current closure proposal benefits one resident and places the other residents in a deprived and dangerous situation with no safe access to Dyce and points east. At the Dyce Caravans exit the problem really exists for approximately two hours and the lane abuse occurs at relatively low speed...”</p>

<u>Consultee</u>	<u>Response</u>
Kirkton Villa	<p>“...normally access Dyce by using the section which is now proposed to close. “</p> <p>“To access Dyce a right turn on to Dyce Drive – a 60mph section – will be needed and due to traffic speeds this will be impossible at 4-6pm and highly dangerous in the morning rush hour due to speeding cars and motorbikes.”</p> <p>“We definitely resist the proposed closure on the grounds that for residents west of the railway bridge at Dyce Caravans a comparatively safe exit is being removed and the remaining exit is a very real safety hazard for right hand turns.”</p>
Nether Kirkton Farmhouse	<p>“I am certainly in favour of any measures which would make the road safer and a complete closure of the road except for access would achieve that but I am concerned about 1) the inconvenience to our neighbours as a result of the control measures to be put in place and 2) the expense to the public purse of the control measures.</p> <p>Alternatively could a road closure sign be erected in the first place and can we then monitor the situation to see whether control measures are in fact required?”</p>
Tigh Na Bruiach	Supports the closure of this road to through traffic.
Dyce Caravans	Supports the closure of this road to through traffic.

<u>Consultee</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Newells Farm, Oldmeldrum (Partner in the running of Nether Kirkton Farm)</p>	<p>“...closing the described section of Pitmedden Road...driving out on to Dyce Drive, a 60mph section of fast flowing constant traffic with a tractor and loader often carrying silage bales. This is a hazardous and suicidal manoeuvre that would only result in a serious road accident come time. At present we use the Dyce Caravans end of Pitmedden Road to enter Dyce Drive, a 40mph section of slow moving traffic. I am well aware of the problems at the Dyce Caravan end but it has to be noted that traffic is slow moving and congested with lane hopping occurring at slow speed therefore reducing the risks of accidents.”</p> <p>“This section of Pitmedden Road...is part of a bus route and also provides access to Railtrack signalling boxes, emergency access to the Raith’s Farm Rail Terminal, part of a police route for airport security, access for residents on Pitmedden Road and finally access and safe passage for farm machinery, people and livestock for Nether Kirkton Farm.”</p> <p>“If you close this one you will exacerbate the congestion on Dyce Drive and create an even greater problem.”</p>

Proposed 'Prohibition of driving / motor vehicles except for access' on section of Pitteden Road indicated by hatching. Motor vehicle access to land / structures adjacent to closed section would be barrier controlled.

