

## REPORT TO BANFF AND BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 16 JUNE 2015

### ROUTE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE A947 ABERDEEN TO BANFF ROAD

#### 1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Endorse the works done to date and welcome the reduction in accidents and the commitment to continue this work.
- 1.2 Consider progress to date on the development of a Route Improvement Strategy for the A947 between Aberdeen and Banff.
- 1.3 Approve wider consultation exercises including a public consultation exercise with communities along the route and workshops later in the year.

#### 2 Background/Discussion

- 2.1 Reference is made to the meeting of Infrastructure Services Committee on 21 August 2014 at which a report was considered outlining progress with regards to improving road safety on the A947 and seeking approval for the development of a long term Route Improvement Strategy for the A947 between Aberdeen and Banff.
- 2.2 At that meeting, an update was provided on a series of engineering and enforcement measures that had been implemented on the A947 following the findings from a Route Accident Study, published in March 2011. From a comparison of before and after accident data, it was concluded that the results has been largely positive but a longer period of monitoring was required to confirm the findings.
- 2.3 At that meeting Members also approved the development of a long term strategy for the A947 which was to address a number of key questions, including:
  - What is the role/purpose of the route and how will this change in the future, in particular post construction of the AWPR, the proposals to fully dual the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness and taking on board wider development pressures/aspirations?
  - What potential improvements are required to address the strategic objectives of the route (for increased safety and improved journey times/journey time reliability)?
  - How could these improvements be progressed in the form of a business case?

- 2.4 A further report went to the meeting of Infrastructure Services Committee on 14 May 2015 at which the Members were given an update on progress on the detailed work on the long term Route Improvement Strategy that was initiated in early 2015 and is being undertaken in line with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) methodology as this would be a core element of any business case to secure future funding. This involves the following key stages:
- A high level critical review of previous work undertaken on the A947.
  - An evidence review of problems and issue along the route based on previous work and new data analysis.
  - The development of strategic objectives for the route.
  - Option generation and sifting.
  - Option appraisal and reporting.
- 2.5 The key aims and objectives of the Strategy are to develop a route which is fit for the purpose of connecting the communities along the route in a safe, effective, and sustainable manner while fully supporting the regeneration activity in north Aberdeenshire. With this at the heart of the Strategy it should be possible to develop interventions that can aid the removal of driver frustration whilst also improving journeys both in terms of overall time and variability. These outcomes should also support the continued accident reduction objectives.
- 2.6 At both meetings of Infrastructure Services Committee, Members commented on the need to listen to local feedback in shaping future work. The first step in this process is bringing this report to this Area Committee and the other two Committees with the A947 within their boundaries. This report provides the opportunity to update Committees on the findings from the measures put in place along the route as part of the Route Accident Study as well as an update on the initial work in developing the Route Improvement Strategy.
- 2.7 In relation to the Route Accident Study this was published in March 2011. The objectives of the study were to adopt a holistic approach to analysing and assessing existing route conditions and to identify measures (in terms of Engineering; Enforcement; Education; Encouragement) which could enable a reduction in accident numbers to meet identified Scottish Government 2020 targets. This would be done by promoting a partnering approach across the route by each of the appropriate stakeholders.
- 2.8 The A947 is a largely rural 'A' class route which is approximately 38 miles (61 km) in length and is characterised by many bends and frequent minor and agricultural accesses often with poor visibility. Whilst the overall accident rate for the road prior to the Route Accident Study was below the national investigatory level the rate of fatal accidents was close to 50% higher.
- 2.9 Approximately 50% of the accidents were on bends and the other 50% on straight sections of road. This lead to a different set of measures dependent on location.

- 2.10 For that reason, whilst consideration was given to the possible introduction of average speed cameras early in the process on investigation it was found that the installation of average speed cameras would be unlikely to address the variation in causation factors over the length of the route.
- 2.11 On the straighter sections of the route it was agreed with the Police that mobile speed cameras would be used only at locations where there was evidence of speeding and a linked accident history. By 2012 nineteen hard standing areas were in place for NESCAMP's mobile speed camera vehicles to operate.
- 2.12 In 2012 and 2013 NESCAMP carried out 305 and 258 hours of enforcement respectively with 102 and 84 offences recorded at approximately 3 per hour. This work continued in 2014 when 210 hours of enforcement led to 38 offences.
- 2.13 On the bends, a consistent signing strategy for the placement of signs and hazard marker posts has been implemented on large sections of the route and this work will continue until completed. In addition, safety camera signage along the route, improved Gateway signage together with improved white lining, surface treatment and improved drainage issues have all been implemented.
- 2.14 A summary of the accident history (broken down into four sections) is shown in Appendix A relative to a baseline average yearly accident rate for the period 2005-09. This gives information on accidents before and after interventions. The results are largely positive but given the short timeframe, the results cannot be regarded as statistically significant and a longer period of monitoring is required. There remains a concern over the number and severity of accidents on the section between Fyvie and Turriff and further interventions are currently being developed that will be built into the current work programmes.
- 2.15 One option which was consulted on but never taken forward in the Route Accident Study was the possible introduction of additional Slow Vehicle Moving Laybys. Whilst such measures are a means of helping to prevent platooning the limited use of the existing facilities together with the significant costs of installing additional sites make them difficult to justify them.
- 2.16 Members should also be aware that our officers continue to work with Police Scotland on engineering, education and enforcement along the A947 and across Aberdeenshire. This ranges from the work of our dedicated Transport Safety Education Officers in schools and colleges through to the enhanced presence of the Police through dedicated patrols and safety cameras. The impact of this ongoing work is reflected in the accident statistics which are monitored on a regular basis. The recorded accidents show a welcome and significant reduction in 2014 compared to previous years but in the period 2010-2014, 7 people lost their lives whilst traveling on the route. More detailed information on the numbers is provided in Appendix 1 with a breakdown into 4 sections along the route shown in Appendix 2.

- 2.17 Turning to the long term Route Improvement Strategy it is proposed to undertake a wide consultation exercise over the next few months. In June reports will go to Garioch, Formartine and Banff & Buchan Area Committees. It is then intended to undertake a wider public engagement exercise in July and August. This will be done by developing an online survey based on an amended version of the survey presented in Appendix 3 in order to more thoroughly understand problems and issues along the A947 and the interventions that route users would like to see considered as part of the long term Route Improvement Strategy. The survey would be promoted to communities along the route through appropriate means including local press and social media, while hard copies could also be made available at local libraries and Council offices.
- 2.18 The initial work to date has focused on the identification of evidence based problems and opportunities. As such a review of current trends and issues focussed on existing transport provision along the route, travel to work and socio-economic trends, analysis of accident data, and assessment of future travel demand issues. In terms of future impacts, consideration has been given to potential traffic impacts on the A947 from local development plan allocations while consideration is also being given to how travel patterns could change post construction of the AWPR.
- 2.19 The results of this work, supplemented with the outputs from the consultation with the local communities and route users, will be used to produce a consolidated list of problems and opportunities. These, in turn, will inform the development of a set of Transport Planning Objectives to guide the study and in turn the identification of improvement options to address the long term route objectives.
- 2.20 In parallel with this work there are remote traffic data collection exercises being undertaken by Transport Scotland related to the A96 Dualling project. This is providing an opportunity to collect data from motorists on the A947. This includes the collection of journey time data from motorists using the route, which will be useful in identifying any particular sections of route where motorists experience delays, for instance due to limited overtaking opportunities or due to more fundamental capacity issues.
- 2.21 In addition, a programme of Roadside Interviews (RSIs) planned by Transport Scotland took place on the A947 north of Newmachar to understand current trip pattern information (e.g. origin and destination information and trip purpose) of motorists in the region. The results are currently being analysed and should enable a better understanding of travel patterns of existing route users and will inform the Route Improvement Strategy. Additionally, as part of the RSIs, a short 'A947 Travel Survey' will be issued to motorists to specifically explore their perceptions of driving on the route, including instances which may lead to driver frustration, such as limited overtaking opportunities, slow moving agricultural vehicles and general network capacity issues.

- 2.22 Following analysis of the traffic survey data, outputs from consultation exercises and identification of potential route improvement options, a high level appraisal exercise will be undertaken to identify those interventions most suitable for further consideration. This will be reported in a draft strategy which will be available later this year at which point a consultative exercise will be undertaken with key stakeholders at workshops to be held in Newmachar, Oldmeldrum, Turriff and Banff in September and October. Thereafter a draft long term Strategy with an Action Plan will come back before the Area Committees in November and December for comments with a final report going to Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2016. The programme of projects to deliver the strategy would then be worked up to a point where they could be subject of a bid into the capital planning process.
- 2.23 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted and are content with the report.

### **3 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications**

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as there will be no differential impact, as a result of this report, on people with protected characteristics.
- 3.2 There are no specific staffing implications arising from this report. The development of a strategy for the A947 is being carried out using existing resources within the Council's Infrastructure Services teams and use of private sector specialists as necessary.
- 3.3 The initial work to develop a long term Strategy and any future engineering measures on the route would require to be financed from the Safety Initiative line of the Community Wellbeing heading within the current Capital Plan and major projects would have to be considered within the corporate Capital Planning procedures.

**Stephen Archer**  
**Director of Infrastructure Services**

Report prepared by: Mark Skilling  
Date: 20 May 2015

## Appendix 1 - A947 Accident Data

### Accidents on A947 Aberdeen to Banff Road

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Fatal</b>	2	0	1	2	1
<b>Serious</b>	3	7	8	5	6
<b>Slight</b>	21	12	11	13	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>

### Casualties on A947 Aberdeen to Banff Road

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Fatal</b>	3	0	1	2	1
<b>Serious</b>	3	8	11	9	7
<b>Slight</b>	29	16	14	17	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>14</b>

## Appendix 2 - A947 Rural Accidents

Accidents by Section						
		Accident reduction compared to 2005 to 2009 Average				
		Accidents in line with 2005 to 2009 Average				
		Accidents above 2005 to 2009 Average				
		Pre Works		Post Works		Comments
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Goval to Newmachar</b>					
<b>2.5miles</b>	05 to 09 Ave	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Fatal	0.2	1	0	0	0	Apart from 1x Fatal in 2010, no further Fatal or Serious for next 3 years
Serious	1.4	0	0	0	0	
Slight	1.6	1	2	2	0	
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Newmachar to Oldmeldrum</b>					
<b>6.7miles</b>	05 to 09 Ave	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Fatal	0.2	0	0	0	1	Accidents trending below 2005 to 2009 average
Serious	1.2	1	0	2	1	
Slight	6	5	1	2	4	
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Oldmeldrum to Turriff</b>					
<b>15.3miles</b>	05 to 09 Ave	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Fatal	1.6	0	0	1	1	Further investigation required to determine cause of the increasing Serious & Slight accidents. Although at double the length of the other sections, accidents for 2013 fall in line with the other sections.
Serious	1.6	2	6	5	3	
Slight	5.8	6	4	4	7	
<b>Section 3S</b>	<b>Oldmeldrum to Fyvie</b>					
<b>7.1miles</b>	05 to 09 Ave	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Fatal	1.6	0	0	0	0	All within 05 to 09 average but slight accidents are increasing.
Serious	1.4	1	1	2	2	
Slight	6.2	4	0	2	5	
<b>Section 3N</b>	<b>Fyvie to Turriff</b>					
<b>8.2miles</b>	05 to 09 Ave	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Fatal	0.2	0	0	1	1	<b>Further investigation of Serious Accidents Fyvie to Turriff Required.</b>
Serious	1.4	1	5	3	1	
Slight	7.4	2	4	2	3	
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Turriff to Macduff Junc</b>					
<b>8.9miles</b>	05 to 09 Ave	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Fatal	0.4	1	0	0	0	13 of 15 accidents were wet skid; surface related in 2010 & 2011. Retexturing & resurfacing has resulted in a major reduction in this type of accident.
Serious	1.4	0	1	1	1	
Slight	8	8	5	2	2	

## Appendix 3 - A947 Travel Survey

### A947 TRAVEL SURVEY

Aberdeenshire Council is carrying out a study to identify options for improving the A947 between Banff and Aberdeen. We would be grateful if you would spare a couple of minutes to answer a few questions about your experiences of using the route. **All answers are anonymous so please answer honestly.**

<b>Q1 Where are you typically travelling to and from on your journeys on the A947?</b>	
From:	To:
Reason for Travelling:	

<b>Q2 Thinking about your most recent journey on the A947, how often did you...? (Circle one for each row)</b>					
	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Occasion-ally</i>	<i>Hardly ever</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Overtake on a single carriageway section of road	1	2	3	4	5
Feel frustrated due to being in traffic travelling slower than the speed you wanted to drive at	1	2	3	4	5
Feel frustrated at the lack of opportunity to overtake	1	2	3	4	5
Feel unsafe due to the actions of other road users	1	2	3	4	5
Feel that the journey is/was taking longer than it should	1	2	3	4	5
Start to overtake but had to abandon the manoeuvre	1	2	3	4	5
Have to slow down when you are aware that there is a speed camera ahead	1	2	3	4	5
Think you exceeded the speed limit by more than 10 mph	1	2	3	4	

<b>Q3 Thinking about recent journeys on the A947, how often do you witness the following...? (Circle one for each row)</b>						
	<i>Nearly all the time</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Quite often</i>	<i>Occasion-ally</i>	<i>Hardly ever</i>	<i>Never</i>
Overtaking when it was risky	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vehicle failing to complete an overtake manoeuvre	1	2	3	4	5	6
A vehicle being tailgated	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vehicles travelling at excessive speed	1	2	3	4	5	6

<b>Q4 On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = low and 5 = high), how enjoyable is your journey?</b>				
1 (Low)	2	3	4	5 (High)

<b>Q5 On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = low and 5 = high), how satisfied are you with how long your journey typically takes?</b>				
1 (Low)	2	3	4	5 (High)

<b>Age (circle one only)</b>	17-34	35-59	60+
<b>Gender (circle one only)</b>	Male	Female	

The closing date for response is Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015. For any queries, please email [transportation@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:transportation@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

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