

Accident Analysis and Leadburn Junction

Report by Kevin Anderson, Acting Director Resources

1 Purpose of Report

This report is presented to inform Council of the investigations and findings following the amended motion agreed at 26 March, 2019 meeting, where Council resolved to:

1. *To engage with officers at Scottish Borders Council to seek support for a roundabout at Leadburn Junction*
2. *Instructs the Director, Resources to bring forward a paper to Council before summer recess 2019 with updated costings for a possible solutions at Leadburn Junction*
3. *Further instructs the Director, Resources to seek any other avenues of support or funding.*
4. *for the paper referred to in paragraph 2 to include the professional opinion of officers as to the priority of this junction measured against other road safety issues in the county.*

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council records all injury accidents on a computer database called “Key Accidents” which is a piece of software used by many local authorities throughout the country. From this we produce a priority list based on the number of road injury accidents within a set distance of the roundabout, junction, bend etc. The priority list is refreshed regularly once accidents are confirmed by the police.

Leadburn locality is currently ranked joint 8th (with 5 other sites) on the Council’s priority list which considers all accidents in the last 3 years to the end of December 2018.

The priority list excludes a number of other sites with more accidents which are located on trunk roads, as trunk roads are not the responsibility of Midlothian Council.

Over the years Midlothian Council has carried out a number of alterations to the junction which have resulted in a reduced number of casualties.

- 2.2 Following a fatal accident in 2005, which was not attributed to the junction and was the first fatality since we began keeping records in 1981 (January 2010 was the second fatality), the Council undertook a feasibility study to consider what improvements, if any, could be made

to the junction as it was recognised that there was a growth in traffic from developments in the Scottish Borders.

The feasibility study, undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Council, reported in March 2006 and concluded that a roundabout at the location would give the greatest benefit and indicated that costs might be in the region of £351,000. A signalised junction was also considered but the benefits were not considered to be as great as with a roundabout, at an estimated cost of £253,000. The study also recommended some short term measures at the junction to improve visibility for traffic exiting the A6094 from Howgate and for traffic exiting the A701 from Moffat.

The Cabinet agreed at its meeting of 13 June 2006 to take forward the preferred option of a fully compliant roundabout to the detailed design stage.

As it was recognised that the majority of people who would benefit from an improved junction at Leadburn would be Scottish Borders' residents the scheme was submitted to the Regional Transport Partnership, SEStran, for consideration as part of its capital programme.

A report was submitted to Cabinet in October 2006 outlining progress to date. The report included a proposed plan for the roundabout and noted that safety audit and land ownership investigations were almost complete. The report also noted that the temporary works were about to commence (value around £10,000) and proposed that plans be progressed ready for tendering the project in accordance with the Council's tendering procedures.

SEStran agreed to the inclusion of the scheme in their draft capital programme and allocated the following funding provision:

2006-07	£50,000
2007-08	£50,000
2008-09	£300,000

The programme and funding provision was agreed in principle by the Scottish Executive and funding for the first year was approved by the Minister. It was anticipated that funding for the second and third years would be approved in due course.

The design work was tendered with a return date of 30 March 2007 and the successful consultants subsequently appointed to progress the detailed design for the preferred option i.e. a roundabout.

Detailed design work took place during the summer of 2007 and a number of problems were identified including the requirement for some additional land and the presence of substantial BT cabling that would require diverting. The BT cable work is designed by BT and this delayed the detailed design work for the roundabout. Estimated cost for the construction of the roundabout rose to £900,000 and this figure was reflected in SEStran's proposed capital programme for 2011 onwards. By November 2007 design work was nearing completion and the consultant was instructed to tender for some site investigation work which was deemed necessary. This was done and a Ground Investigation Contractor subsequently appointed.

2.4 Decision to Cancel

The SEStran Board was informed at its meeting of 14 December 2007 that the Scottish Government had informed all the Regional Transport Partnerships that they would not be receiving any capital funding for 2008/09. Through subsequent discussions with Government Officials over December 2007 and January 2008 we were informed that unlike previous years there would be no facility to carry forward any money into 2008/09. This meant that any proposed work had to be completed by 31 March 2008. SEStran were keen to maximise spend on SEStran projects and not have to return any unspent money at the yearend so set a deadline of mid-February for any unspent SEStran grant money to be returned.

Poor weather and difficulties in getting permission from a landowner to access to an area of land delayed the site investigation work to the point where the Council had no option but to cancel the proposed site investigation works.

Under the Single Outcome Agreement, Midlothian Council received a "share" of the SEStran capital budget amounting to some £545,000 for each of the years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11. This was an insufficient sum to deliver the previously identified SEStran projects which, in addition to Leadburn, included Lothianburn P&R, A701 public transport improvements and completion of National Cycle Route 1 through Midlothian.

Monitoring of the junction by officers from Commercial Operations will continue.

The most recent estimated cost for constructing a roundabout at the location was £900,000 but this figure is now dated and will likely have risen to around £1.3M to £1.4M using the BCIS confirmed index. These are estimated costs and do not take into account changes to design standards and or new technology.

The rough estimate for the construction of traffic signals in 2006 was £253,000. Applying the BCIS confirmed index as above this would be £360,000 to £400,000, although signals do not provide as many benefits as a roundabout.

Consideration could also be given to developing further the traffic signals option identified in the original feasibility study. A budget of around £30,000 would probably be required to develop this.

Informal approaches have been made to Officers of Scottish Borders Council, and they have advised that SBC is unable to contribute to a roundabout at Leadburn. Previous attempts by SBC to raise developer contributions for Leadburn from housing sites in the Borders have apparently been overturned by The Scottish Government's Reporter. SBC have agreed to co-operate on investigating any further improvements to signage on the approaches to the junction.

2.5 Accident Cluster sites

Accident cluster sites are identified using the KeyAccs programme with our database of information, supplied by the Police, on injury road accidents.

The programme searches the data for a minimum number of accidents meeting the criteria in a given diameter. If the number found reaches the minimum other accidents nearby are checked to see if they are close enough to be included. The criteria was injury road accidents with dates from 2016 to 2018 inclusive, with 3 or more injury accidents in the 3 years, in a diameter of 100m.

9 sites were found with 5 or more accidents, another 8 sites had 4 accidents each and 9 sites had 3 accidents each. Of the total of 26 sites, 5 were on trunk roads, so for the Scottish Government to deal with.

The largest number of accidents in a cluster was 16, at the Trunk Road Sheriffhall Roundabout which is positioned mostly in Midlothian, including immediate approaches, at the A720 City Bypass junction with the A7 and A6106 (a). Of the 16 accidents 3 were serious, and 13 were slight.

Other trunk road sites were:

- (b) A702 at the Hillend triple junction with A703 and C36 Pentland Road (5 accidents – all slight),
- (c) A68 at the junction with the B6372 for Dewarton/Gorebridge (4 accidents - 2 serious, 2 slight),
- (d) A702 at the junction for Hillend Ski Centre (4 accidents – all slight),
- (e) A68 at the junction with the A6106 for Dalkeith (3 accidents – all slight).

(1) The largest number of accidents on Council designated roads was at Eskbank Toll Roundabout, junction of the A6094, A768, B6392, and B703 (8 accidents - 2 serious and 6 slights)

(2) The second largest number was nearby on the B6392 on the bends between Eskbank and Elginhaugh Bridge (7 accidents – 1 serious and 6 slights)

Third equal were 5 sites with 5 accidents each:

(3) A6106 King's Gate (1 fatal, 3 serious, 1 slight) (of 9 fatal accidents in 2016-8 only one at a cluster)

(4) A6094 Dalkeith High Street (1 serious, 4 slight) (another nearby slight was excluded as it was on a separate street)

(5) A6094 Eskbank Road near Croft St (all slight)

(6) A701 Straiton B702 junction (all slight)

(7) A7/A6094 Eskbank Road roundabout (all slight)

In joint 8th place were 6 sites with 4 accidents each:

(8) A701/A703/A6094 Leadburn crossroads (2 serious, 2 slight)

(9) A6094 bends east of Howgate (2 serious, 2 slight)

(10) A6094/B6372 crossroads (1 serious, 3 slight)

(11) A701/A703 Ploverhall junction (all slight)

(12) B6373 Buccleuch St/London Rd/Lothian St/Lothian Rd junction (all slight)

(13) B6482 Bryans Rd/Morris Rd/Suttieslea Rd junction (all slight)

In joint 14th place were 8 sites with 3 accidents each:

(14) A6094 Eskbank Rd, Dalkeith near Morrisons car park (2 serious, 1 slight)

(15) A703 bend south of Hillend (2 serious, 1 slight)

(16) A701 Seafield Moor Rd/Seafield Rd/Bush Farm Rd junction (all slight)

(17) A701 Gowkley Moss roundabout (all slight)

(18) A701/C36 Pentland Road junction (all slight)

(19) A768 The Loan/McNeill Ave (all slight)

(20) B704 Cockpen Road near Bonnyrigg Primary (all slight)

(21) B6482/Crawlees Rd Mayfield Industrial Estate (all slight)

Some of these sites are more easily treatable than others. For example the surface at site 2 (B6392 Eskbank - Elginhaugh) has already been treated following some of these accidents and a change in speed limits is being proposed. At site 1 (Eskbank Toll roundabout) the existing layout and surrounding buildings make meaningful changes difficult, as has been reported previously. Further details of the sites are available in the Members Library including a location map.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

Funding will be required to take forward any further options for Leadburn. The amount of work required to update costs and benefits of any option would depend on those which Council prefer to progress. Any one option could cost between £30-50,000 to take to design stage. while £50,000 is currently allocated from Roads Capital Budget to cover any improvements identified through the cluster site analysis, traffic calming (justified by accidents and speeds) and school routes across the whole Council area.

The potential for CCTV has been considered. A quote of £15,000 was received for traffic monitoring and analysis over one week at Leadburn. Notwithstanding the high cost, there is no evidence to suggest that this would identify any trends that we are not aware of, or any additional measures that could be justified at this location.

3.2 Risk

There is a risk of not achieving the best accident reduction outcome if the Leadburn site is given priority over other sites with more significantly ranked problems or which are more easily treatable. The Council may be required to demonstrate how accident reduction funds were prioritised in any subsequent accident inquiries or court proceedings.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The aims and objectives of investigating and prioritising accident cluster sites is to reduce injuries due to accidents on the road. This also supports the active travel theme encouraging walking cycling and public transport use and the health, air pollution and climate change benefits associated.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Midlothian Council has adopted the Scottish Government accident reduction targets for 2020. Further to this the Council is committed to

reducing carbon emissions and improvements on the road network support this aim.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The objective of accident analysis is to prevent injury and deaths on the road.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The Road Safety Forum meets quarterly to discuss road safety and accidents across Midlothian with partners including Police Scotland, the trunk road operators and other Midlothian Council departments. Mitigation measures by all partners are logged and tracked and progress against the agreed 2020 targets measured.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

This work stream aims to help people, children and the Midlothian community live a happier, healthier and longer life.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Improvements on the road network will aim to offer a more sustainable form of transport use which in turn will lead to lower carbon emissions.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues associated with this report.

4 Recommendations

Council is asked to instruct officers to;

1. work with Scottish Borders Council to improve advance speed activated signing at Leadburn
2. work with Safety Camera Programme to consider installing fixed speed cameras or average speed cameras in place of occasional use of mobile camera van.
3. continue works on prioritising sites for accident remedial works alongside traffic calming and school safety.

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Background Papers:

Interim evaluation results