

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 24 MAY 2016

MONTROSE TO A90 ROAD LINK STUDY

REPORT BY HEAD OF TECHNICAL AND PROPERTY SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report details progress made on feasibility and options appraisal for road links from Montrose to the A90, which focus on a new access to the A90 at Stracathro and seeks approval to progress with topographical surveys and design development.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) approves the undertaking of a topographical survey on land adjacent to Hill of Stracathro to allow further design development, as detailed in this report; and
- (ii) approves the design development for lowering the A937 road at Hillside Rail Bridge, as detailed in this report.

2 ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are prosperous and fair;
- Our communities are safe and strong;
- Our communities are sustainable; and
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Improving road links to the A90 from Montrose have been considered periodically in the past, however, no proposals have come to fruition. There has been on-going concerns expressed by Transport Scotland about the capacity of the Laurencekirk Junction to support growth in traffic which can potentially lead to economic growth being constrained in North Angus. The current environment and circumstances present an opportunity to apply fresh consideration to the road links, particularly with progress with City Deals centred on Aberdeen and the Tay Cities region, which potentially bring significant economic growth opportunities in North Angus if the road constraints can be addressed. The recent and ongoing Brechin & Montrose Charrettes have also provided public support to looking again at the road links that removes HGV's from the town centre.
- 3.2 The proposed Laurencekirk Junction improvements also relate to the local considerations for access to the A90 from Montrose from the A937. The ongoing capacity of the junction remains an important element to planned development in the north of Angus, but will remain constrained by the low bridge at Hillside, and the road constrains at the bridge over the North Esk and onwards through Marykirk.
- 3.3 Working with input from the Head of Planning & Place, the Head of Technical & Property Services has commenced an options appraisal into the road links from Montrose to the A90, which are not dependent on the outcome of the Laurencekirk Junction improvements. These have explored potential connection to the Stracathro junction on the A90 from the A935 and

A937 roads out of Montrose.

4 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Initial findings from the options appraisal suggest that there are possible routes to link to the Stracathro junction on the A90 from the A937. A further option to provide a route from the A935 at Mill of Dun, north-westwards towards the Stracathro junction is also feasible.
- 4.2 All options would require a new section of road from the U434 at Hill of Stracathro from the existing to the U552, which is the slip-road at the Stracathro junction on the A90. This area is a major utility infrastructure corridor, which will require detailed discussions with the operators. The configuration of the connection to the A90 Trunk Road junction would also require detailed discussions with Transport Scotland. To allow these discussions to proceed, the geometric design of the new road would need to be developed. This requires a detailed topographical survey of the land to be undertaken. Permissions with landowners to undertake the survey would be necessary.
- 4.3 Options along the A937 are reliant on the 'pinch-point' being removed at Hillside Rail Bridge, which has a height restriction that prevents HGV access. This could entail lowering of the road under the railway bridge. Initial findings are that the topography would allow the road alignment to be altered, so as to provide unhindered HGV access. Network Rail is responsible for the rail bridge. Preliminary discussions with Network Rail have been open to developing more detail on the proposal that would affect the bridge. Detailed discussions with the utility providers which run under the road at the bridge to determine what diversions or protection would also be required to determine if apparatus could be amended at the bridge and its approaches.

5 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed to undertake a topographical survey of the area of land at Hill of Stracathro as detailed above. Other area surveys along the potential routes may also be required. The results of the topographical survey will allow the road design to be developed to a point where a preferred route can be determined and thereafter discussions can proceed with Transport Scotland, utility providers and landowners. Permission from land owners to access land would be pursued ahead of undertaking the topographical survey.
- 5.2 It is proposed to develop more detailed proposals for the potential option of lowering of the road under the Hillside Rail Bridge, so as to allow for discussions with Network Rail and utility providers to proceed further.
- 5.3 These works would allow development of potential road designs to look at feasibility and costs. Future reports at key stages that require approvals will be brought to subsequent committees, along with information reports to provide updates.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Funding of £500,000 for 'Route Action Plan - Mill of Dun to Stracathro' has been allocated in the 2015/2020 Financial Plan & Provisional Capital Budget 2106/17 (reference Report No 62/16), phased over years 2016/17 to 2018/19. This follows on from the outputs from feasibility, which were subject to a Supplementary Budget Allocation for Infrastructure Development in 2015/16.
- 6.2 The costs of the topographical survey and design development with discussions are estimated to be in the order of £50,000 and can be contained within the budget allocation noted above.

7 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Risks

7.1.1 The risks at this stage of the development of the road link study are the implications of the topography on road geometry, the location and required diversion and protection of utility apparatus and the approvals to connect to the A90 at Stracathro and to lower the road under the Network Rail Hillside Bridge.

7.1.2 The proposals allow for the development of the design options so that these risks are assessed and managed.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report No 62/16 - Provisional Revenue and Capital Budgets 2016/2017 and Beyond - Provisional Capital Budgets Volume (Cream Cover), Angus Council, 18 February 2016

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