

AGENDA ITEM NO 4

REPORT NO 46/25

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 25 FEBRUARY 2025

PETITION – SPEED REDUCTION, A935, BALWYLLO FARM COTTAGES

REPORT BY GRAEME DAILLY, DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This Report advises members of an Electronic Petition (E-Petition) received in connection with a request to reduce the speed limit from 60mph to 30mph on the Balwylo Farm Cottages Road; and that the bus stop on this road also be upgraded; and considers the requests.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1 This Report contributes to the achievement of our priorities in our Council Plan for 2023 –2028.

Caring for our Place

- Enable inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe communities across Angus Council.
- Make our local services accessible.
- Improve connectivity in and around Angus Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes receipt of the petition as reproduced in **Appendices 1 and 2**;
- (ii) notes the detail set out in the findings of engineering investigations;
- (iii) notes the detail set out in the options appraisal in **Appendix 4**; and
- (iv) agrees, at this time, to adopt Option 1 – Do Nothing, as outlined in **Appendix 4** in regard to the speed limit, taking into account the evidence regarding speeds and accidents, and the proposals in Report No.12/25 for a review of the Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy. The situation would be reviewed following the conclusion of the Speed Limit Strategy Review.
- (v) agrees to Option 3A - Do nothing regarding the request to upgrade the bus stop. However, notes that the options will be reviewed following the conclusion of the Speed Limit Strategy Review, and that officers will seek feedback from local representatives on the preferred modification to the bus stop.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The A935 is the main road from Brechin to Montrose, passing through the settlement of Balwylo, which consists of some nine properties adjacent to the A class road with two further properties set back off the road. There is only one property to the south of the A935, with the majority on the north side of the carriageway. The majority of the properties are over a length of approximately 175 metres with one further property and an access within a further 100 metres. Balwylo farm is sited approximately 125 metres to the south on a side road leading towards Bridge of Dun and there are football pitches adjacent to the farm. A plan of the area is provided in **Appendix 3**.
- 4.2 The A935 and the side road to Bridge of Dun are classed as rural roads and the national speed limit, which is currently a maximum of 60mph, applies. Both roads are unlit.

- 4.3 An E-Petition with 94 valid names was lodged on 23 October 2024 by residents of Angus highlighting concerns of the dangerous driving and volume of serious accidents over the past 12 months on the Balwylo Farm Cottages Road.
- 4.4 Details of the E-Petition is included as **Appendix 1 and 2** of this report. Elected members are asked to note the points raised in terms of the E-Petition.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The E-Petition was received by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change on 23 October 2024 and, in accordance with Standing Order 13(3), it was presented to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee for its further consideration on 3 December 2024 in Report No.356/24. The Scrutiny and Audit Committee agreed to refer the matter to the Communities Committee for further consideration.
- 5.2 The E-Petition, signed by 219 people which included 91 signatories from outwith the Angus Area and 34 duplicate signatories, was lodged with Angus Council. More recently with the advent of E-Petitions, the Committee has accepted petitions when only postal codes of signatories are provided particularly in light of data protection considerations. All signatories within the Angus area have provided a postal code and there are 94 signatories from Angus.
- 5.3 The E-Petition informs members that children, elderly and disabled people live in the cottages and Balwylo Farm junctions are busy with farm machinery turning and crossing with sometimes up to 50 cars attending football games on the pitch.
- 5.4 Residents of Angus request that elected members consider the options outlined in the petition as follows:
- (i) Reduction of the speed limit from 60 mph to 30 mph.
 - (ii) For the Bus Stop on this road to be upgraded.
- 5.5 The report to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee of 3 December 2024 (Report No.356/24) included some information provided by the Roads and Transportation Service to assist members in their deliberation. This included investigations which were undertaken upon receipt of the petition from regarding Balwylo, historical data and previous requests. This information is reported below along with a fuller examination of the site and the wider context.
- 5.6 Following receipt of the petition, a speed survey was carried out on the A935 at Balwylo Cottages between 11 and 18 September 2024 and recorded an average speed of 53mph and an 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles were travelling at OR under) of 62mph. The 7-day, 24 hours/day monitoring recorded an average of 4,508 vehicles per day.
- 5.7 The 2024 speed results are similar to previous results:

Survey Date	24Hr Ave. Volume	Average Speed	85th%ile Speed
August 2011	3603	51	59
September 2017*	1117	51	60
September 2020	3686	47	57
September 2022	3903	51	60
September 2024	4508	53	62

*2017 traffic volume figures were impacted by roadworks.

- 5.8 A press article report on the petition dated 31 August 2024 noted six incidents in the previous year, with the locations unspecified. Incidents were reported to include cars in fields, damage to the bridge along the road to Brechin, and an incident with two motorcycles with one casualty being air lifted to hospital.
- 5.9 Members will be aware that Police Scotland document data from Roads Traffic Collisions where injuries are reported. Data relating to 'damage-only' collisions is no longer compiled by Police Scotland. A search of the road traffic collision database confirmed that, in the five years from 30 August 2019 to 29 August 2024 there have been eight injury incidents along the relevant section of the A935, with three of these being during the year to August 2024. There have been no injury

Road Traffic Collisions reported by Police Scotland in the immediate vicinity of Balwylo Cottages, with the nearest collision being approximately half a mile from the settlement.

- 5.10 Following previous, historic, complaints from residents from Balwylo, signage displaying a place name and “drive safely” message has been provided.
- 5.11 Balwylo does not have sufficient frontage development to meet the requirements for a reduced speed limit as per the Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy which is aligned to Scottish Government published guidance. The settlement is typical of many rural locations throughout Angus.
- 5.12 The bus flag stop at Balwylo is typical of many rural stops along the A935 and across Angus. East bound buses drop off at a hardstanding area in front of the cottages and is designated as a hail and ride section, therefore drivers will effectively allow passengers to alight where best suits them along the road. This is a common approach throughout Angus, as well as other rural authorities, and is an efficient way to serve this location.
- 5.13 The West bound bus drop off is on to a small, slabbed area in the verge opposite the cottages.
- 5.14 The Transport team have no reports of incidents or concerns regarding the bus stop, prior to the petition. The bus services along the A935 route operate on a hail and ride basis and stop out with the flagged stops when asked to do so by passengers.
- 5.15 In common with many of the circa 800 similar bus stop locations throughout the County, there is no bus shelter or bus lay-by at the Balwylo stop, and limited road verge for any such provision. A bus layby on either side of the road is likely to require land purchase and engineering works.

Wider Context

- 5.16 The council adopted the Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy 2008 as set out in Report No 266/08 to the then Infrastructure Services Committee in March 2008. This strategy has served the council over a number of years and following national guidance at the time. At the time, the national guidance provided a consistent approach to the setting of speed limits across Scotland and within individual settlements, which enabled an understanding by drivers of the required restrictions and encouraged compliance.
- 5.17 The relevant parts of the current Council agreed Speed Limit Strategy are set out in **Appendix 4** along with the comparable criteria for Balwylo.
- 5.18 Report No.12/25 agreed at Communities Committee on 21 January 2025 proposed that a review of the Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy is undertaken through the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group.
- 5.19 As noted in Report 12/25, on 27 November 2024, Transport Scotland launched a consultation on National Speed Management Review which seeks to ensure speed limits on Scotland's roads are appropriate and contribute to reducing injury and death on our roads. The consultation invites feedback on proposals to lower the national speed limit on single carriageway roads from 60 mph to 50 mph and to increase speed limits for goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes on single carriageways to from 40 mph to 50 mph and dual carriageways from 50 mph to 60mph. This may form part of the review of the Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 **Appendix 4** presents options for potential measures to be considered for Balwylo following the concerns raised in the petition. Members are requested to consider the options and the information provided in this report to make an informed decision on the next steps for Balwylo. In doing so Members are asked to consider the wider context and national changes, as set out in this report.
- 6.2 The A935 Brechin to Montrose Road has a national (60mph) speed limit through Balwylo Cottages, with no evidence of speeding issues or accidents that merits a reduction from a 60mph to a 30mph speed limit at this location when considered against the current national advice or the Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy 2008.
- 6.3 In regard to the speed limit, Option 1 – Do Nothing at present, is therefore recommended based on the evidence and alignment to the Council's current Speed Strategy.

- 6.4 Any change to the speed limit is likely to affect the function of the bus stop. Therefore, it is recommended that any upgrade to the bus stop is considered following the review of the speed limit. In addition, officers will contact a representative of the petitioners to seek feedback on the preferred modifications to the bus stop.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no costs associated with the recommendations.
- 7.2 The alternative options have associated costs as set out in Appendix 4. Costs would need to be contained within the appropriate Roads Revenue and Capital Budgets.
- 7.3 In the instance of changes to the speed limit or bus stop being agreed, any costs would displace other priorities within the respective budgets.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The risks associated with this report are considered in **Appendix 4**.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental impact implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached in **Appendix 5**.

11. CHILDRENS RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been carried out within the EIA.

12. CONSULTATION

- 12.1 The Chief Executive, Acting Director of Legal, Governance & Change, Director of Finance, and the Acting Director of Education & Lifelong Learning have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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: (list them below)

- Report No 266/08 - Speed Limit Review – A & B Class Local Roads, Infrastructure Services Committee, 4 March 2008.
- Report No 356/24 - Petition - Speed Reduction and Upgrade to Bus Stop, Balwylo Farm Cottages, Scrutiny and Audit Committee, 3 December 2024
- Report No. 12/25 Angus Council Speed Limit Strategy – Proposed Review, Communities Committee, 21 January 2025.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Petition
Appendix 2 – Petition signatories
Appendix 3 – Plan of Balwylo Cottages area
Appendix 4 – Options
Appendix 5 – Equality Impact Assessment