

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 27 AUGUST 2002**

#### **MAINTENANCE OF THE A76 AND A77 TRUNK ROADS WITHIN EAST AYRSHIRE**

##### **Report By Director of Development Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the actions being taken by the Head of Roads & Transportation and to relay to the Scottish Executive the dissatisfaction of elected members with the current standard of maintenance on the Trunk Roads within East Ayrshire.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** In April 2001, after a protracted tendering process the Scottish Executive awarded the management and maintenance of the South West Unit, which includes the A76 and A77 Trunk Roads within East Ayrshire to Amey Highways.
- 2.2** Previously the A77 was managed by the Clyde Local Authority Consortium and the A76 by the South West Partnership. East Ayrshire Council was a member of these consortia.
- 2.3** Since this change elected members and members of the public have expressed dissatisfaction with the current standard of the maintenance regime now being implemented on these routes. This has been reported to the Scottish Executive by letter and at meetings on numerous occasions with no apparent improvement in standards.
- 2.4** Following the most recent correspondence the Scottish Executive requested a meeting with roads representatives of the Council to discuss the maintenance problems.

### **3. MAINTENANCE MEETING**

- 3.1** At the request of the Scottish Office a meeting was convened within the Council Offices on 18 June 2002 attended by senior representatives of Amey Highways, the Scottish Executive and the Council's Roads Division.
- 3.2** At the meeting the dissatisfaction with the current maintenance regime and inspection process was firmly stated by Council Roads Officials. Points of concern relating to the A76 and A77 Trunk Road maintenance were explained and lists defining these points were given to Amey and the Scottish Executive. It was the intention that these could be discussed at a later date by Amey and the

Scottish Executive in their roles as contractor and client. The points raised are listed at Annex 1 to his report.

- 3.3 A report was requested from the Scottish Executive once this discussion had been held with a response to each point on the lists.
- 3.4 Following the meeting, the group toured the A76 and A77 in turn examining the various points of issue on site with an explanation being given of the problem and the standard of maintenance expected.
- 3.5 The Head of Roads subsequently wrote to the Scottish Executive re-iterating the strength of concerns, and adding further concerns about the poorly executed surface dressing work carried out on several stretches of the A76 in late July.

#### **4. RESPONSE FROM THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE**

- 4.1 The full response from the Scottish Executive was not received until 14 August, two months after the meeting on site. This is appended at Annex 2.
- 4.2 In this report the Scottish Executive states that Amey are broadly meeting their obligations and that the Performance Audit Group (PAG) report on the first year's performance will be issued soon.
- 4.3 The schedule attached to the letter reports that action has been taken in a number of areas. But some issues remain outstanding or inadequately answered including:
  - the schedule for grass cutting continues to be held under review by the Scottish Executive
  - sign repairs on the A77 remain incomplete
  - the Scottish Executive are in dispute with Amey over obligations relating to the most urgent category of repairs

The Scottish Executive have yet to respond in full on the concerns about the surface dressing of the A76 and improvements in winter maintenance arrangements.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Whilst some action has been taken it has required intense pressure and has taken many weeks. Detailed aspects of the contractual arrangements remain unsatisfactorily defined. There also appears to be an inadequate inspection and reporting system operated by Amey, and quality auditing by the Scottish Executive is failing to reflect local concerns.

## **6. POLICY/LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Nil.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** The Committee is asked to:

- a) note the action taken by the Scottish Executive to following complaints raised by the Council about maintenance standards on the A76 and A77; and
- b) report back to the Committee on further actions relating to the outstanding issues identified in para 4.3, and the overall performance of the contractor based on the forthcoming report by the Performance Audit Group

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

JK/SH/YK  
8 August 2002

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

For further information on the content of this report please contact Jim Kane on 01563  
576310

**Implementation Officer: Jim Kane**

## A77 Trunk Road - East Ayrshire Council Maintenance Issues

12/06/02

### Verge Maintenance - Sight Lines

**Verges** Sight lines not cut - only a 1 metre swathe cut on inside bends.  
Advance directions signs on Kilmarnock Bypass - signs partly obscured by hedge and tree growth.  
Hedge and tree growth from Inchgotrick northwards requires trimming to prevent obstruction of sight lines.

**Centre Reserve** As of 12 June - centre reserve not cut.

Poor sight lines at B751 and A719 junctions.

**Bellfield Roundabout** Bushes require to be removed below road level to prevent obstruction of sight lines.

This a high speed roundabout and conflict arises between slow moving vehicles entering the roundabout and vehicles on the roundabout.

### Signs

North end of centre island at A719 junction - Illuminated No Entry and Keep Left Arrow missing for some time.

Unlit temporary Keep Left Arrow at ground level unsatisfactory - also partly obscured by grass.

A number of signs are still dark.

Electronic warning sign - north bound approach to B764 - shows "Slow Queue Ahead" when no queue is present.

### Lighting Columns

East Ayrshire carried out and optimised design of 2 columns for B764 junction - wrong height of columns with wrong type of lanterns installed.

A column has also been missing at this location for approx. 1 year after a RTA.

Although improved a number of lights are still dark, particularly at Meiklewood southbound off-ramp where a section has been out for some months.

### Traffic Management

#### Slow Lane Closures:

East Ayrshire Council and Strathclyde Police considered that the use of slow lane closures on the 4 lane section presented an unacceptable risk to road users. With ever increasing traffic volumes, forcing slow moving traffic into the fast lane where there is no centre reserve and lanes are of sub-standard widths, requires drivers to carry out high risk manoeuvres.

Fast lane guide islands for planned works, such as grass cutting, are essential if public safety is to be maintained.

### **C/Way Maintenance**

While temporary patching is carried out timeously, permanent patching of defects can take an unacceptable length of time - eg. a structural failure at the southbound kerblineline near to B778 Fenwick underpass, which has been present for some months, is steadily becoming more dangerous. Similarly temporary patching around ironwork is left to deteriorate before being permanently patched (northbound carriageway at Clunch Road end).

### **Winter Maintenance**

There is a general concern that response and planned treatments are inadequate to meet the extreme adverse weather conditions which are experienced on a regular basis on the A77.

The following examples are of great concern to East Ayrshire residents -

There was an occasion last winter when the Police closed the A77 due to frozen road surfaces presenting unacceptable hazards. The diversion route was along the high level and tortuous B769 which suffers from the worst effects of adverse weather. Public safety was therefore transferred to East Ayrshire Council to accommodate large volumes of trunk road traffic on a high risk route.

Similarly - 7 number minor accidents occurred one morning on the northbound carriageway north of Bellfield roundabout.

### **Structures**

Bellfield Roundabout is programmed for resurfacing - bridges have failed structural assessment for 40 T. vehicles.

River Irvine Northbound - bearings were identified as requiring replacement.

## **A76 Trunk Road – Points of Concern as at 13-06-02**

1. **Marchburn and Borland Laybys** – Historically grass verges at these laybys were always cut to amenity standard as these were a popular stopping place for tourists. This presented a good impression to road users entering East Ayrshire on the A76 from the south, a main tourist route. Under SWP Contract trees planted at each location as recommended in Landscape Action Plan. Under present contract grass has not been maintained to this standard and trees have not been maintained or replaced.
  
2. **Cumnock Bypass Roundabouts** – Centre islands have hard and soft landscaping and grass was cut to amenity standard. Under SWLAC contract agreement with Scottish Office for 12 cuts a year, once every two weeks during growing season.  
Roundabouts are seen by communities as focal point for entrance gateways to Auchinleck and Cumnock, hence desire for high standard of maintenance  
Under present contract grass not cut to this standard and no maintenance has been carried out to landscape areas. Hard landscaping requires weed killing and removal.
  
3. **Mauchline Shrub Beds** – These were put in as part of the traffic calming works for the A76 in Mauchline. Previously maintained to normal urban standard. Monthly weeding and hoeing of beds, April to September. Pruning, digging over and replacement of plants as required, October to March. The residents feel that the standard of maintenance of these beds reflects on the community particularly as they are on the main through road.  
Very minimal maintenance has been carried out on the shrub beds during present contract.
  
4. **Grass Cutting** – Full sightlines not cut.  
  
**Mauchline, Kilmarnock Road** – Hedge adjacent to Beechwood Avenue requires trimming annually  
Verge on west side within urban area requires amenity cut 12 times per annum.
  
5. **New Cumnock** – Verge at south end within urban area requires amenity cut 12 times a year.  
Small shrub beds put in as part of traffic calming have never been planted.
  
6. **Other outstanding issues-**  
**Mauchline** – Gully covers missing north and south ends for longer than 3 months  
**New Cumnock** – School Crossing Patrol sign vandalised. Outstanding for over 2 months.  
**Rottenyard Roundabout** – Chevron missing.

**AGENDA**