

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 21 OCTOBER 2003

A76 CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP

Report By Director of Development Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to seek the agreement of the Committee for the Director of Development Services to liaise with officials of Dumfries and Galloway Council and other public and private sector interests, as appropriate, with a view to establishing a joint strategy to secure a strategy and investment in the future upgrading of the A76 trunk road.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The A76 is an important long distance trunk route for traffic between Kilmarnock and Dumfries which also provides access to the M74 and England via the A75. The A76 also performs an important local function in linking the towns and communities along the route and provides essential access for local commerce, industry and tourism.

- 2.2** The Scottish Office Policy Document, Roads Traffic and Safety, which was published in the early 1990's, identified the need for a Route Action Plan (RAP) study for the whole length of the A76 between Kilmarnock and Dumfries. The study was completed in 1995 and set out proposals for comprehensive localised improvements along the length of the route. It was recommended that an action plan to improve the route should be progressed in four packages:-

- (i) Accident Prevention and Reduction Measures:- low cost improvements to signing, lining, anti skid surfacing, safety barrier works and improvements to visibility by cutting back vegetation where necessary;
- (ii) Measures in Communities:- traffic calming and environmental improvements in the towns and villages along the route;
- (iii) Overtaking Opportunity Schemes: - local improvement schemes to provide additional safe overtaking opportunities on the rural sections of the route, to provide more reliable journey times and enhance safety.
- (iv) Route Action Measures: - measures such as junction and lay-by; improvements to impose safety and raise the level of service along the route.

2.3 Up until 2001 the road was managed by East Ayrshire Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council under contract to the Scottish Executive. This included the preparation of proposals for improvement. Since then management of the road has been contracted to Amey.

3 PROGRESS ON THE ACTION PLAN

3.1 Accident Prevention and Reduction Measures were provided throughout the length of the route in East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway between 1991 and 1995 as the RAP study was being undertaken. Despite these measures, there continues to be road safety issues on the rural sections (see annexed table).

3.2 Extensive traffic calming measures have been implemented in Mauchline and New Cumnock. However, further community improvements are needed to mitigate, the heavy traffic flows through Mauchline which give rise to extensive queuing and environmental impacts. There have been recent requests for further traffic calming in New Cumnock and a pedestrian crossing near the Castle Primary School.

3.3 Overtaking opportunities have been improved by the provision of Differential Acceleration Lanes (DAL's) for both directions of travel on the trunk route at the Bowhouse Prison roundabout. A DAL will also be provided for southbound traffic at the nearby Crossroads Roundabout, which is under construction. Despite these improvements, measures to enhance safety and improve overtaking opportunities have not yet been provided at the following locations which had a high priority in the RAP report:-

- (a) Crosshands Junction, north of Mauchline
- (b) Howford Bridge, between Mauchline and Auchinleck;
- (c) South of Skerrington Roundabout, between Cumnock and New Cumnock; and
- (d) Between New Cumnock and the boundary.

3.4 Junction improvements have been carried out at the B713 Catrine road and at Loganhill.

3.5 Further review of the route is now needed to fully assess the level of service on the route. In particular, the following need to be considered:

- (a) Provision of metre strips at the edge of the running surface where not in place;
- (b) Right turn lane at the U734 junction to Ramsey and Johnson;
- (c) Right turn lane at the C50 at Brackenhill; and

- (d) Provision of additional lay bys as necessary.

4 PROPOSED JOINT STRATEGY

4.1 It is proposed to seek to establish a joint strategy with other stakeholders and the Scottish Executive with a view to securing investment to address the issues of:

- (a) Road safety on the rural sections of the route;
- (b) Road safety and environmental impacts in the communities;
- (c) The need for regular, clearly defined overtaking opportunities to enhance safety and improve the reliability of journey times; and
- (d) Ensuring that a good level of service is provided throughout the route

This would involve:

- Regular joint briefings of the Transport Minister, MPs, MSPs and MEPs; and
- A jointly managed review of the earlier Route Action Plan Study.

5 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 The Council's Local Transport Strategy identifies the need for an effective strategic road link between Ayrshire and the M744. In the longer term it is not considered that this can be provided satisfactorily by the A76. The route is nevertheless an important link between some of the principal communities within East Ayrshire and is currently viewed by the Scottish Executive as the strategic route to the South. It is considered that promoting safety improvements on the road would make a valuable contribution to delivering the objectives of the Local Transport strategy, whilst the Council in conjunction with the Ayrshire Economic Forum continues to press for a more direct strategic link to the M74.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any costs associated with the proposed joint strategy will be met from existing resources. The cost of any in-depth review of the Route Action Plan would require to be met by the Scottish Executive.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (a) Note the content of the report; and
- (b) Agree that the Director of Development Services shall liaise with the principal stakeholders with a view to establishing a joint strategy to secure the future upgrading of the A76 trunk road.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services
6 October 2003
KO/SH/YK

For further information please contact Keith Orton on 01563 555714

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TABLE 1**A76 INJURY ACCIDENTS: AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS PER YEAR**

	1990 - 1994		1995 - 1997		1998 - 2002	
	ALL	KSI	ALL	KSI	ALL	KSI
Kilmarnock – Mauchline	8.0	2.0	7.7	1.7	10.4	2.4
Mauchline	2.4	1.2	2.0	0.3	1.8	0.2
Mauchline – Auchinleck	3.4	1.0	2.7	0.3	3.4	1.0
Cumnock & Auchinleck bypass	6.6	2.0	1.3	0.0	1.0	0.6
Cumnock – New Cumnock	3.4	1.2	1.7	0.3	2.0	0.6
New Cumnock	1.6	0.8	3.7	1.7	3.0	1.0
New Cumnock – Dumfries & Galloway boundary	N/A	N/A	1.0	0.0	2.2	0.6
TOTAL	25.4*	8.2*	20.1	4.3	23.8	6.4

* excludes data for New Cumnock to Dumfries & Galloway boundary

Notes

ALL = All personal injury accidents (Fatal, Serious & Slight)

KSI = Killed & Seriously Injured (Fatal & Serious accidents only)

Cumnock & Auchinleck bypass opened December 1991