Press release: Community Councillors hit out at poor safety record of A1

With several dangerous incidents on the A1 in the previous 10 days, East Lammermuir community councillors raised serious concerns about the layout and management of the trunk road at their recent meeting on Tuesday 2 October, particularly in relation to the cement works junction with the A1087.

The first incident was a serious accident at the cement works junction on Saturday the 23rd September. Traffic was diverted to the Spott Road junction, and one witness described one car as "crumpled". It is believed that serious injuries were sustained.

The second incident took place on Tuesday 26 September when the 253 bus from Innerwick was travelling in the Dunbar direction at around 0920. As the bus was approaching the cement works junction, a tanker with a large tap at the back pulled out into the right hand side lane of the westbound dual carriageway. The bus could not stop and had to overtake in the left-hand lane, with the bus driver anticipating that the tanker would stay on the right hand lane. In the opinion of a passenger, it was only the quick reaction of the driver that averted an accident.

The third incident was an accident near Torness on 29 September, and a fourth an overturned lorry on 2 October.

Councillors from Oldhamstocks, Innerwick and Spott were also disturbed that there had been no change to the Spott Road roundabout layout, where there continues to be some confusion there continues to be some confusion.

Because of their concerns, Councillor Barbara Wylie in behalf of East Lammermuir Council has pursued a Freedom of Information request to the police about the safety record of the A1 between Spott Road roundabout (Dunbar) and Castle Dykes roundabout (Cockburnspath). Even on this relatively short stretch there have been 4 fatalities and 5 seriously injured in addition to 41 slightly injured. As the police point out in their reply, these statistics do not take account of collisions were there is no obligation to report it to the police.

The council was unanimous in expressing its concern about the anticipated increase in road traffic, particularly at the cement works junction, when the Viridor Incinerator starts working and lorry loads of refuse are imported from South Lanarkshire and Clyde Valley councils. In addition, there are two residential building sites under construction on the eastern side of Dunbar, with another planning application pending, and residents are likely to use this junction.

Community councillors decided to contact Martin Whitfield, MP, Ian Gray, MSP, and local Dunbar councillors, as well as East Lothian transport spokesperson, and Humsa Yousaf, Minister for transport. Councillors regretted that the A1 Action group, previously championed by Councillor Michael Veitch, no longer appears to be operational.

Note to editor:

1. The tables in response to the Freedom of Information request are appended.
2. For more information please contact Elisabeth Wilson on 07989 654018