

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Kinross-shire Local Committee

20 January 2022.

A911 EAST OF SCOTLANDWELL

**Report by Head of Environmental and Consumer Services
(Report No. 22/9)**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report advises members of road safety and vehicle speed concerns which have been raised regarding the A911, east of Scotlandwell. It also recommends that further detailed investigations are carried out as part of a Route Action Plan to inform if any additional signing, lining or other road safety mitigation measures are required.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The A911 between Scotlandwell and Auchmuirbridge is a rural section of single carriageway, which is subject to the national speed limit. Concerns have been raised by local residents, Portmoak Community Council and elected members regarding road safety and vehicle speeds along the A911 east of Scotlandwell.

1.2 Road traffic collision history

- 1.2.1 Local residents reported two crashes to the Council during winter weather conditions in early 2021. Road traffic collision reports from Police Scotland for incidents during 2021 have still to be received by the Council and subsequently added to the Council's database. However, if any incidents were damage-only and non-injury crashes then they would not appear on Police Scotland's records (and ultimately on the Council's database), as local authorities only receive information from Police Scotland on injury collisions. Therefore, it is important the residents report any incidents to the Council in order to ascertain a full picture of events.
- 1.2.2 During the five-year period 2016-2020, there were no reported crashes on the A911 between Scotlandwell and Auchmuirbridge. In the previous five years period 2011-2015, there were two reported crashes. In 2014, three vehicles collided resulting in three slight casualties. In 2012, one vehicle left the road resulting in one casualty.
- 1.2.3 In addition to the above, on 15 July 2021, a road fatality occurred on the A911 between Auchmuirbridge and Scotlandwell. A westbound motorcyclist failed to negotiate a slight right-hand bend and, as a result of this collision, the rider sadly sustained fatal injuries. The Road Death Notification report from Police

Scotland, which is a preliminary statement, however, does not cite the road environment or road layout as contributory factors in this crash.

1.3 Traffic survey data

1.3.1 Following road safety and vehicle speed concerns being raised at four locations between Scotlandwell and the Council boundary with Fife were surveyed the week beginning 3 August 2021. These were: -

- (i) east of **Scotlandwell** village,
- (ii) at **Wester Bowhouse** (near the motorbike fatality site),
- (iii) at **Arnot** and
- (iv) in **Auchmuirbridge** hamlet.

1.3.2 The first three sites were on a national speed limit roads while the survey at Auchmuirbridge sat within the 40mph speed limit. Each counter was in place for one week. A second survey was carried out at Wester Bowhouse the week beginning 10 August 2021, given that the presence of a large crane at a building site may have been a distraction to drivers and affect travel patterns, particularly vehicle speeds. A summary of the survey data is shown below:

1.3.3 Both the mean speeds and 85th percentile speeds were similar at each site on weekdays and over the course of the whole week. Traffic volumes and vehicle categories were also similar at each site. This indicated that vehicles were travelling in free-flow conditions and the road is under capacity. *[The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of all traffic is travelling at or below. It is used for road design and establishing speed limits.]*

- (i) East of **Scotlandwell**, there was an average weekday flow of 2,033 vehicles, evenly split in both directions. The 7-day average dropped slightly to 1,944 vehicles due to lower traffic volumes at the weekend. The mean speed was **43.3mph** and the 85th percentile speed was **51.1mph**. An average of 22 vehicles per day were recorded travelling above the maximum permitted speed limit, which equates to 1.1%. No vehicles were recorded at excessive speed *[defined as 15mph above the speed limit]*. Cars, motorbikes and light goods vehicles made up over 84% of the traffic. Ordinary goods vehicles (rigid lorries) and buses comprised a further 15.5% and heavy goods vehicles less than 1%.
- (ii) At **Wester Bowhouse**, during the first week, there was an average weekday flow of 2,041 vehicles. The 7-day average dropped to 1,948 vehicles. The mean speed was **46.7mph** and the 85th percentile speed was **56mph**. An average of 89 vehicles per day were recorded travelling above the maximum permitted speed limit, which equates to 4.6%. An average of one vehicle per day was recorded at excessive speed. Cars, motorbikes and light goods vehicles made up over 84% of the traffic. Ordinary goods vehicles (rigid lorries) and buses comprised a further 15.5% and heavy goods vehicles less than 1%.

During the second survey week, there was an average weekday flow of 2,034 vehicles. The 7-day average dropped to 1,971 vehicles. The mean speed was **47.6mph** and the 85th percentile speed was **57.4mph**. An average of 92 vehicles per day were recorded travelling above the maximum permitted speed limit, which equates to 4.6%. An average of one vehicle per day was recorded at excessive speed. Cars, motorbikes and light goods vehicles made up 84% of the traffic. Ordinary goods vehicles (rigid lorries) and buses comprised a further 15% and heavy goods vehicles the remaining 1%. The traffic survey data over the two weeks is almost identical. The data does not indicate that drivers were distracted by construction work adjacent to the road.

- (iii) At **Arnot**, there was an average weekday flow of 2,006 vehicles. The 7-day average dropped slightly to 1,915 vehicles. The mean speed was **47.1mph** and the 85th percentile speed was **54.3mph**. An average of 74 vehicles per day were recorded travelling above the maximum permitted speed limit, which equates to 3.8%. An average of one vehicle per day was recorded at excessive speed. Cars, motorbikes and light goods vehicles made up over 87% of the traffic. Ordinary goods vehicles (rigid lorries) and buses comprised a further 12.5% and heavy goods vehicles 0.5%.
- (iv) In **Auchmuirbridge**, there was an average weekday flow of 2,041 vehicles. The 7-day average dropped to 1,947 vehicles. The mean speed was **32mph** and the 85th percentile speed was **37.8mph**. An average of 49 vehicles per day were recorded travelling above the maximum permitted speed limit, which equates to 2.5%. No vehicles were recorded at excessive speed. Cars, motorbikes and light goods vehicles made up over 86% of the traffic. Ordinary goods vehicles (rigid lorries) and buses comprised a further 13.5% and heavy goods vehicles less than 1%.

1.3.4 Although it links Kinross with Glenrothes, officers do not consider the A911 a busy "A" Class road when compared to other major routes in the Council area or compared with the trunk road network (M90). The A911 carries 2,000 vehicles per day with 1% heavy traffic. In comparison, the A977 west of Kinross carries 5,500 vehicles per day with 5% heavy traffic. The B996 south of Kinross carries 4,000 vehicles per day. To give further context, the main street in both Kinross (High Street) and Milnathort (New Road) carry 5,000 vehicles per day.

1.3.5 Concern has been expressed by some of the residents of West Bowhouse and local elected members about the number of vehicles recorded travelling above the maximum permitted speed limit. This is a matter for Police Scotland and the Council have made the Police aware of the speeding concerns raised. Reducing the speed limits on the A911 would not reduce speeding, rather it is more likely to have an adverse effect on driver behaviour due to unnecessary slow moving vehicles.

1.3.6 Requests have been received from local residents, elected members and Portmoak Community Council for the speed limit to be reduced to 40mph. However, lowering the speed limit on a straight section of road with good visibility (including full overtaking sight distance) will not necessarily result in lower vehicle speeds. Speed limits should be self-regulating and reflect the road environment. Drivers need to understand, and recognise, why they are being instructed to travel at a lower speed. They will then drive at an appropriate speed for the environment that they are travelling along or through. However, setting a speed limit too low can result in poor compliance and lead to:

- (i) requests for additional traffic calming measures
- (ii) continued Police enforcement
- (iii) drivers using alternative routes creating congestion or issues elsewhere

1.3.7 The West Bowhouse steading development is in two parts with a single access with one completed and occupied, while the other is still under construction. When completed there will be five dwellings sharing the steading access. The West Bowhouse farmhouse is adjacent to the site with a private access. The visibility splays from the steading access were conditioned in the Planning Approval as part of the original application and installed by the developer. Maintaining these visibility splays is the responsibility of the property owners.

1.3.8 In addition, there are numerous small housing developments and steading developments in rural Kinross-shire with a single or double access onto the public road. At each of these sites, the national speed limit is considered appropriate. These sites include:

- Kellieside on the A91 west of Milnathort (14 houses and 1 access)
- Mid and East Bowhouse on the A911 east of West Bowhouse (8 houses and 2 accesses)
- Mains of Mawcarse on the B996 northeast of Milnathort (19 houses and 1 access)
- Blairforge on the B996 south of Kinross (14 houses and 1 access)
- Blairfordel on the B996 south of Kinross (12 houses and 2 accesses)
- Kinnaird on the B996 south of Kinross (5 houses, 2 businesses and 1 access)

Similar to West Bowhouse, the speed limit can be reviewed if there is further development or if travel patterns change.

1.3.9 Although none of these sites are recognised as settlements in the Local Development Plan, some of them are recognised locally as hamlets and have village nameplates informing drivers of possible turning manoeuvres ahead. Lochran on the B996, south of Kinross, is not listed as a settlement in the LDP but has recently received village nameplates. The hamlet, straddling two roads (B996 and U224) has 19 dwellings and 14 accesses over a length of 500m, plus access to the dwellings at Flockhouse along a private road to the west. In comparison, West Bowhouse will have five dwellings with a single

access plus the adjacent West Bowhouse farmhouse over a frontage of less than 200m.

- 1.3.10 Both Police Scotland and the Traffic & Road Safety team consider the national speed limit on the rural section of the A911 between Scotlandwell and Auchmuirbridge to be appropriate for the road category, traffic volumes and vehicle speeds. Therefore, a reduced speed limit is not considered to be necessary or appropriate.
- 1.3.11 The temporary 20mph speed limits and 40mph buffers at Scotlandwell (south and east) were installed as part of the Spaces For People physical distancing project in 2020/21. Monitoring of these lower speed limits is ongoing. The 40mph buffers are intended to create a graduated speed reduction entering the village and encourage better compliance with the 20mph limit. The 40mph buffer between Scotlandwell and Kinnesswood has been in place for years because the two villages are close together (similar to the 40mph rural sections to the north linking Kinnesswood with Easter Balgedie and Wester Balgedie). Scotlandwell and Kinnesswood are registered as settlements in the Local Development Plan. There is no settlement between Scotlandwell and Auchmuirbridge and this is a rural road with sporadic frontage development.
- 1.3.12 The section of the A911 from Auchmuirbridge to Leslie lies within Fife Council area. It is currently subject to a 40mph speed limit. The alignment of the road is very different with a series of blind summits, hidden dips, and has a double line system to prohibit overtaking due to restricted forward sight distance. The section in Kinross-shire past West Bowhouse, East Bowhouse and Arnot is straight with full overtaking sight distance. The two sections of the A911, either side of the Council boundary are not the same and, as a result, this is reflected in the two different speed limits.
- 1.3.13 One resident of West Bowhouse has asked for a bus stand on the opposite side of the road for the school children. The provision of bus stops, or hard-standing areas would normally be considered as part of the Planning process for a new housing development. At West Bowhouse, a bus boarding area was conditioned in the Planning Approval but has not yet been provided by the developer.
- 1.3.14 Most assessments investigate the walked route along the length of the road but, when necessary, crossing points are also considered. At West Bowhouse, school children cross the road in the morning to board the bus. The guidance states that, where the traffic flow is below 240 vehicles per hour the road is assessed as safe to cross. 240 vehicles per hour equates to one vehicle every 15 seconds, which allows for a reasonable gap time to cross a road. The traffic flow between 0800 and 0900hrs along the A911 on a weekday is less than 100 vehicles providing adequate gaps in the traffic for pedestrians to cross the road.
- 1.3.15 It has also been claimed by one resident of West Bowhouse that the iron manhole cover in the carriageway, on the Scotlandwell side of West Bowhouse, is a hazard. There is no reference to the manhole being a

contributory factor in any of the reported road traffic collisions. During the recent motorbike fatality, the bike and rider were on the opposite (offside) side of the road to the manhole. However, this concern will be investigated and raised with the relevant utility company.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 As stated above, both the Council's Traffic & Network team and Police Scotland have concluded that a reduced speed limit is not appropriate as previous analysis has shown that there is no evidence of excessive vehicle speeds or any significant accident history. However, it is clear that there remains local concerns and perceptions that there are road safety issues along the A911 east of Scotlandwell, primarily in relation to vehicle speeds and school children crossing the road to access school transport. Therefore, it is intended to include the A911 east of Scotlandwell as part of the Traffic & Road Safety teams Route Action Plan programme going forward.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The national speed limit on the rural section of the A911 between Scotlandwell and Auchmuirbridge is considered to be appropriate for the road category, traffic volumes and vehicle speeds by both Police Scotland and The Traffic and Road Safety team.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee note that: -
- (i) there is insufficient development for West Bowhouse to be signed as a settlement and the road markings and warning signs at West Bowhouse are considered appropriate for the road environment; and
 - (ii) the A911 will form part of a Route Action Plan and that a further report will be submitted to a future Committee for agreement on any required improvements following the completion of the planned Route Action Plan investigations in 2022.

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