

# Information Note

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 MVA Consultancy was commissioned by TACTRAN to investigate and summarise the use of strategic roads in the region by lorries and the extent to which congestion affects these routes.
- 1.2 As part of this study, a consultation exercise was undertaken with key stakeholders with hands-on knowledge of freight routing in the area, to ascertain their views on issues on the network which can affect HGV movements. These views provide valuable information and insight regarding the locations and extent of specific freight-related problems on the strategic road network.
- 1.3 This qualitative view of HGV routing issues complements the other more-quantitative aspects of the Study, which focussed on the analysis of data on HGV flows and average network speeds.
- 1.4 Consultations were undertaken using a combination of semi-structured telephone interviews and email-based 'dialogue' with the relevant stakeholders.
- 1.5 Interviews were structured around the three key themes of the study, namely:
  - safety;
  - congestion, and;
  - journey-time reliability.
- 1.6 It should be noted that there is significant correlation between these network attributes, since road accidents and incidents and the associated diversions often lead to significant delays and congestion for other road users and are a major component of journey time reliability problems. There is also a strong correlation between congestion and journey time reliability problems, as areas of network close to capacity are less able to deal with day-to-day variations and are more likely to suffer from the type of traffic flow-breakdown which leads to major tailbacks and unexpected delays for road users.
- 1.7 It is also important to remember that these issues will impact upon all vehicles on the road network, not just goods vehicles.

1.8 In total 13 stakeholders participated in the consultation, including representatives of:

- Angus Council;
- Central Scotland Police;
- Confor (Forestry);
- Dundee City Council;
- Freight Transport Association;
- First for Food;
- GB Oils (Brogan);
- Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority;
- Perth and Kinross Council;
- PS Ridgeway;
- Road Haulage Association;
- Stirling Council; and
- Tayside Police.

## 2 Congestion Issues

2.1 The most commonly noted congestion issue sighted was the eastern section of the Kingsway in **Dundee**. Stakeholders commented on particular problems approaching roundabouts in the peak hours. In addition to the Kingsway, it was noted that as Dundee Waterfront develops, both Riverside Drive and East Dock Street could be subject to congestion, initially with construction traffic, and later as the development is completed.

2.2 Stakeholders noted that streets in and around **Perth** become congested due to a 'gap' in the network of trunk roads bypassing the City which forces traffic travelling between the north and east of the city to travel through Perth rather than around it, creating particular problems on the following city centre streets:

- Edinburgh Road;
- Glasgow Road;
- Bridgend;
- Charlotte Street;
- Scott Street; and
- High Street.

2.3 Stakeholders believed that routes in **Stirling** city centre were prone to congestion, but generally felt that these were no worse than any other similarly-sized urban centre. Delays on A91 ring route were mentioned by some respondents, particularly the approach to Junction 9 of the M9 at Pirnhall.

- 2.4 Junction 9 of the M9 was also noted as a key pinch point on the strategic transport network, functioning as the main distributor hub for the area, linking the M9, M80, A91 and A872. The police noted that when there is an incident downstream on any of these routes, very often the delays will stretch back and affect this junction. This is a particular problem with delays to traffic on the M80, primarily due to the ongoing carriageway upgrades. The police noted that this area is also very susceptible to poor weather conditions, which can add to the congestion problems on this route. Additionally, HGV drivers often chose to 'sit out' periods of poor weather in the layover near Junction 9. Whilst this is generally welcomed, a platoon of HGVs getting back on the road at the same time when the weather clears can bring its own congestion problems.
- 2.5 The Chartershall Bridge crossing the M9, south of Stirling was noted as problematic due to the number of bridge strikes – it is apparently the 'most struck bridge' in Scotland. While these bridge strikes only occur on the southbound carriageway, they generally result in road closures and local diversions which lead to congestion on all of the diversionary routes.
- 2.6 The stakeholders contacted did not identify any major congestion issues in the **Angus** area, other than the delays caused by slow-moving agricultural or forestry vehicles on rural routes.
- 2.7 Outside the Tactran area, the three Forth crossings (Forth Road Bridge + Kincardine x 2) were identified as important, due to their strategic role providing links into and out of the region. Consultees noted that incidents or restrictions on the Forth Bridge will result in congestion and delays at the merge between the two crossings at Kincardine.

### **3 Safety Issues**

- 3.1 In terms of road safety, the A9 and its lack of safe overtaking opportunities were often mentioned by the consultees. A similar lack of overtaking was noted on both the A811 and the A84. Locations on the A84 at Glenogle and Loch Lubnaig were considered to be accident blackspots.
- 3.2 Slow tractors and other agricultural vehicles using rural routes were believed to lead to specific overtaking-related and 'rear-ending' problems.
- 3.3 Several consultees noted a view that HGVs often 'rat-run' on roads which are ill-suited for heavy vehicles, in order to avoid delays elsewhere on the strategic road network.
- 3.4 In Dundee, access to the docks was sited as a particularly busy route for HGVs and was noted as having various road safety issues.
- 3.5 The A85 near Dundee Riverside Airport was considered to be an accident blackspot, as was the A90 just north of the Kingsway.

### **4 Reliability Issues**

- 4.1 In general the distinction between congestion and reliability is difficult to make and stakeholders felt any issues previously sited, were also all relevant in terms of network reliability. There were, however, a small number of additional issues which can be summarised as follows.

- 4.2 Tourist towns and routes in the Trossachs can suffer from reliability issues due to congestion in the summer months. This problem is particularly apparent on the A84 around and through Callander.
- 4.3 Rural routes appear to have a large proportion of tractors which cause reliability issues, the A94 was noted as being particularly problematic for this.
- 4.4 City centre congestion was also noted as contributing to journey time reliability issues in Perth, Stirling and Dundee.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 When analysing comments raised by stakeholders, it became apparent that most opinions on congestion and reliability were in relation to the main city centre areas (Stirling, Perth and Dundee). Consultees in particular noted congestion on Dundee's Kingsway, particularly on the eastern section.
- 5.2 Outwith these city centre areas, the main issues with the strategic road network identified by the consultees were the lack of overtaking opportunities on the A9 and several other key routes. This problem can often be exacerbated by slow moving agricultural vehicles, which can then lead to road safety problems.