

TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM - A72 ACTION SUB-COMMITTEE 06 SEPTEMBER 2016

BRIEFING NOTE

The purpose of this note is to summarise the matters discussed by the A72 Action Sub-Committee at their meetings held on 24th March and 16th May 2016.

Asset Management

The Council's Asset Management section is responsible for Revenue and Capital maintenance works in connection with all adopted Roads, Bridges and St Lighting assets.

In undertaking this role officers use inspection and condition information to evaluate assets which have been identified as being in need of treatment or repair. This evaluation process allows an annual planned programme of works to be compiled for completion within the level of budgets allocated. The asset types / treatments are as follows:

Roads and Bridges

Surface Dressing
Overlays
Patching
Walls & Structures
Footways
Drainage
Masonry Refurbishment
Rural A & B Class Roads – white lining

St Lighting

Specifically identified sections where column and lantern replacement is required

In year 2016/17 the following projects have been included in the planned programme of works on the A72 between Galashiels and Skirling:

- Neidpath Road, Peebles – Footway Works
- Peebles Road, Innerleithen – Footway Works
- Thornielee – Walkerburn – Carriageway Patching
- Caerlee Corner, Innerleithen – Drainage
- Dirtpot Corner – Wall Repairs
- Peebles Road, Innerleithen – St Lighting Column Replacement

A report on the A72 had been presented to the Tweeddale Area Forum on 2nd September 2015 which advised on the position regarding the condition of the A72 and on the identified sections highlighted for Surface treatment. The report advised that the Council participated in a national assessment of road conditions, Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Surveys (SRMCS). This information produced a road condition indicator consistently across all roads in Scotland. The survey measured a number of condition criteria, namely:- (a) texture (roughness of the road); (b) rutting (wheel tracking); (c) longitudinal profile (smoothness of ride); and (d) cracking. The Statutory Performance Indicator for the condition of the Scottish Local Authority road network was defined as “the percentage of the road network which should be considered for maintenance treatment” The overall results from the SRMCS were presented using a colour convention set out as follows:-

- **Green** Minor defects might be present, but the road was considered to be in an acceptable condition
- **Amber** Further investigation was required
- **Red** The road had deteriorated to a point where repairs were very likely to be required to preserve serviceability and to prolong its future.

The RCI was derived by adding together the lengths of road shown as “red” and “amber”, and expressing the result as a percentage of the total road network length.

Authority	2015 RCI	Change in RCI 2013 to 2015
Aberdeenshire	25.4%	+1.1%
Moray	26.3%	+0.2%
Angus	30.1%	+2.2%
Perth & Kinross	35.2%	-0.1%
Highland	36.2%	+3.0%
Scottish Borders	45.5%	+3.8%
Dumfries & Galloway	49.3%	+0.7%
Argyll & Bute	55.6%	-2.0%

2013 - 2015 results show Scottish Borders Council with the greatest decline in condition over the two year period at 3.8% within the rural authority group, and overall the second worst in Scotland.

In terms of the Scottish Borders road network, the condition rating can be further broken down into classification of road as follows:

Road Classification	%RED	%AMBER	RCI Figure
A	3.82	26.65	30.47
B	5.76	33.44	39.20
C	7.70	34.46	42.16
D	15.62	41.64	57.26

In terms of the A72 the condition rating is as follows:

Road Classification	%RED	%AMBER	RCI Figure
A72	3.79	28.13	31.92
	4.1km	30.6km	

The Amber condition is 1.5% above the A class road average for the Scottish Borders.

When the 2014 - 2016 condition rating for the A72 is compared, the RCI figures are shown to have declined further in both Red and Amber categories.

Road Classification	%RED	%AMBER	RCI Figure
A72	4.51	28.64	33.15
	4.91km	31.19km	

Note – the survey information gathered to produce the 2014 – 2016 RCI figures for the A72, was completed before any surface treatment projects were undertaken in 2015/16.

Capital Schemes

A question was raised over potential improvement schemes for the A72.

Over the years, as well as implemented improvements such as Clovenfords to the Nest, potential schemes have been identified at the following locations on the A72 –

SCHEME	Year Identified	PREVIOUS PRIORITY	CURRENT ESTIMATE	LAST UPDATE	COMMENTS
DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC ROUTES					
A72 Dirt Pot Corner	1988	High	£5,940,000	Jul-12	Take out severe corner with width restriction and tie into horsburgh scheme
A72 Woodend - Tighnuilt, phase 1	1991	High	£3,081,600	Jul-12	Realignment to upgrade road and provide safe overtaking.approx 3km
A72 Blyth Bridge Junction	1987	Medium	£648,000	Jul-07	650 m of road realignment and construction of junction
A72 Woodend - Tighnuilt, phase 2	1991	Medium	£1,820,000	Jul-07	Realignment to upgrade road and provide safe overtaking. Phase 2
A72 Stirling Bridge to Clovenfords	1989	Low	£300,000	Jun-02	Last phase of scheme to upgrade road from Stirling bridge to Clovenfords
A72 Right Turn Lane, Tarth Bridge	1988	Low	£540,000	Feb-02	Realignment and provision of right turning lane
A72 Kirkdean Improvement	1990	Low	£990,000	Mar-02	Realignment of A72 and improvement of its junction with A721
A72 Re-alignment at Holylee	1990	Low	£3,072,000	Jul-12	Provision of a straight section of road to aid overtaking
ROAD SAFETY SCHEMES					
A72: Ladyurd	N/K	Low	£70,000	Jun-02	Poor visibility at private road access used by general public
A72: Lyne Church Visibility	1993	Low	£11,000	May-02	Visibility improvement at access road to Lyne Church

It should be emphasised however that only a revised Dirtpot Corner scheme is currently in the Council's 10 year financial plan and the prospects for future major schemes are very limited in the current economic climate.

Specific Topics or Issues raised by Community Council Representatives / Councillors

1. The Asset Manager undertook to ascertain if the A72 had received any unexpected benefits from the Bellwin Scheme and advise members accordingly - **There were no repairs undertaken on the A72 which were related to the Bellwin Scheme.**
2. The red gateways of road at the entrance to the town & villages at the 30mph signs ... both ends of Clovenfords, both ends of Walkerburn and the East end of Innerleithen are all worn

- and need refreshing - the replacement of red gateways compete against the planned surface treatment programme being undertaken each year. Unfortunately, when a decision has to be taken on an area of deteriorating carriageway and an area which has more of an aesthetic value, the deteriorating carriageway is currently always going to come out on top.
3. The anti-skid surfacing at the following locations are unduly worn a) the approach onto the Nest Roundabout from Clovenfords [the other two approaches are not as worn] and b) the section just before the entrance to Holylee House - these high friction areas also compete against the planned surface treatment programmes. This type of friction treatment has been placed for a specific reason, i.e. to assist road users when approaching a junction, or at a location which has been identified for treatment due to carriageway deterioration or clusters of injury related accident. However, an added burden in replacing these proprietary surfaces, (and this also applies to the red gateway areas), is that the existing carriageway surface must first be removed and replaced to a depth of 40mm, before the supplementary friction/red treatment is then applied. This means that the cost/square metre to replace these areas is higher than normal re-surfacing, which again puts pressure on limited budgets. We are currently investigating the use of a surfacing material which has a high Polished Stone Value (PSV), which would eliminate the need for the supplementary high friction surface on the top. Hopefully trials may be undertaken later this year depending on the outcome of a cost comparison exercise.
 4. The central white line is disappearing a) at the section near the entrance to Holylee House and b) at the entrance to the Torwoodlee Forest - the Council's lining programme is based and prioritised on a reflectivity survey which in 2016/17 was commissioned to an external consultant. This survey information was then rated using scoring criteria which included, traffic flows; road alignment; accidents. Whilst there are some localised sections of the A72, between The Nest and Peebles, which have been identified as requiring re-lining, overall this section of carriageway has not been placed within the top nine sections of the A Class network which have been listed to be re-lined during 2016/17. It should be noted, however, that the sections of the A72, just to the west of Galashiels and between Peebles and Hallyne, are priorities 1 & 3 within this year's white lining programme and should be undertaken during the next few months.
 5. Community Council representatives identified a number of sections of the A72 which were in a poor state of repair. Much of the road between Peebles and the entrance to Castle Craig hospital was characterised by corroded edges and patched potholes. The overall impression of the road was that the surface was generally poor, rough and uneven. It was not possible to list particular points in the road as there were potholes and damaged edges on most parts of the road. Potholes were often in groups and although they had been patched, were still rough and uneven. Further towards Skirling, the road continued to be damaged and patched in many places - Identified surface defects will initially be dealt with by Neighbourhood Services as part of the Council's cyclic inspection and repair process. The permanent repair of these areas would be undertaken as part of the Council's planned Revenue and Capital Works Programme for the Tweeddale area. In 2016/17 permanent patching works will be undertaken on the A72 between Thornielee and Walkerburn, later this year.
 6. The area at the bend near Mountbog was under water for large parts of the winter and subject to temporary traffic lights for a long period. This remained an area of risk from flooding and the road remained damaged and uneven – earlier this year officers of the Council met with the landowner of the field adjacent to the flooded section of road and a representative of SEPA. The meeting was to discuss why the road was becoming more prone to flooding and to find possible solutions to resolve future flooding. At the meeting the landowner produced an old drainage drawing of his field which showed a network of pipes in the fields that could be investigated. There is also the consideration of clearing some of the silt and accumulated debris within the manmade ditch/burn that runs parallel with the road. This work, however, would need to be undertaken in accordance with SEPA guidelines and permissions.

7. Concerns were raised relating to the sight lines coming out of Lyne Station because of bushes and small trees not being cut – Neighbourhood Services staff have since cut back the visibility splay referred to. There are still two bushes in the adjacent field which, if removed, would further improve visibility. Area staff continue to deal with this by contacting the landowner, Wemyss and March Estates.

8. The junction of the A72 and the A701 remained problematic due to its position on the side of a hill and there were still regular near misses. It would be useful to have a speed limit there and it could be incorporated into a limit which would also cover the village of Blyth Bridge.

This request has been added to, and will be considered at the next speed limit review

9. Community Councillor Douglas submitted that something needed to be done regarding Caerlee Corner, Innerleithen and he referred to the speed of traffic coming into Innerleithen.

The previously ordered additional signing and lining work has now been completed at the location and agreement has been reached, with Police Scotland, to promote a new 40 mph speed limit over this section of road. A detailed briefing paper on the background to the Caerlee Corner and further proposals went to the August Tweeddale Area Forum.

10. Councillor Bell remains of the view that there are two sections of the A72 between Clovenfords & Walkerburn that need crash barriers on the river (southern) side of the road.
a) At and round the first corner (on a downhill slope) following the Thornielee Forest entrance as you travel west bound.

The route will have been assessed in the past but the guidance has changed considerably since then. The old rule of thumb was if it was > a 6m drop (or other inherent danger) then a safety barrier was required but is now more complex with multiple factors under headings such as location, road classification, collision data, and consequential effect. It also has to be recognised that at some locations it can be safer to allow vehicles to leave the road rather than potentially deflect them into oncoming vehicles. A very preliminary look on site at the two locations described would suggest that they are sufficiently back from the river course to make it unlikely that errant drivers would end up there.

11. Clovenfords CC (via Cllr Bell) asked why the foot-path on the south side of the A72 which runs from Clovenfords to the Caddonlee entrance stops there and does not run on until the Nest roundabout.

This would have been decided at the design stage of the bypass and been consulted on at that time. No documented detail could be found but it is suspected a decision was based on a lack of demand/need basis at that time.

12. Clovenfords CC (via Cllr Bell) still wonder why both Innerleithen and Walkerburn merit 'count-down' signs leading up to the 30mph on both sides of their town/village. But this is not seen as necessary for Clovenfords.

Nationally the use of Countdown boards is no longer encouraged

The Department of Transport traffic Advisory leaflet 1/04 notes "As a general rule the department does not authorise the use of countdown signs. This is primarily because they have been shown to have little effect on vehicle speeds. Only in exceptional circumstances where both written and photographic evidence shows insurmountable visibility problems associated with speed limit terminal signs might consideration be given to their installation."

The department's own before and after studies on the subject illustrated that speed reduction, even at the point of the limit, was minimal and the internal report concluded: The results are mixed, but by using the data for the traffic exiting the settlement as a control for the effects of weather etc. The average & 85th%ile speeds show a drop of 0.7mph and a reduction of 5.5% in the number of vehicles exceeding the limit. Given the cost of producing the signs and erecting the poles they do not seem to offer good value for money.

This has led to an "unwritten policy" of retaining the existing countdown boards within the area, but for subsequent requests to look to alternative speed reducing measures