

# Will the lights ever go green at Dalmahoy Junction?



The proposed traffic lights at Dalmahoy Junction are up for debate again next week at the council's Transport and Environment Committee. We reported the need for traffic regulation at this black spot some time ago now, but it took a petition to the council's Petitions Committee on 4 September 2014 to get some serious discussion going. It appears that the wheels of the Transport Committee move slowly.

The council officers recommend putting in a temporary measure with signs warning of the staggered junction. It is admitted that this will be of little help to the pedestrians trying to cross the road to get to the bus stops on either side and it falls far short of the traffic lights which the petition demanded.

This measure alone will cost £12,000.

There have been many collisions at the junction where the entrance to Marriott Dalmahoy Hotel lies on one side of the A71 and the road to Ratho on the other. Transport Scotland calculates that each collision costs around £160,898 which is made up of costs to the people involved and society. So if you apply that cost to one full year after the traffic lights might be in place, the saving would be £143,020. In other words in one year you could almost recoup the losses. This allows for extra money from the Road Safety Budget to be applied to any shortfall in funding.

Judy Wightman, Chair of Ratho & District Community Council told us she was disappointed at the news : "The Community Council have been asking for traffic lights here since 1986 according to correspondence I found recently. It is very

disappointing that the Council is not proceeding now. It would appear that we have to have a fatality at this site before action will be taken. They don't seem to believe this is an accident blackspot, but in fact there was an accident there only last week on 20 August which blocked traffic. These accidents don't necessarily kill people, and they are often unreported, so we cannot tell how many there are, but they happen regularly."

The petition was referred to the Transport Committee in October 2014 who requested a further report outlining costs of the improvements. They came up with three options one of which is to put in traffic signals, the second is to install a controlled pedestrian crossing and the third is simply to put in a pedestrian refuge island in the middle of the road.

The options were discussed at the March 2015 Transport committee when it was decided that the only practical option was to install traffic lights for the safety of pedestrians and vehicles. A shortfall in funding was identified of around £76,000 which meant the committee could not decide simply to go ahead but had to request a further update with more cost analysis.

Traffic surveys have now been carried out and a proposed layout produced showing that there are some pockets of land which the council would have to buy. The cost is now estimated at £430,400. Of that sum only £208,020 can be identified from the Transport and Planning budgets leaving a shortfall which has increased to £222,380.

The shortfall could be reduced by providing funding from the Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets budget (£30,000) South West Locality Transport and Environment (£50,000) and a payment of £10,000 from Marriott Hotel Group. But there is still a shortfall.

The sum now required has risen to £132,380. It appears from

the report that the council simply don't know where that money might come from at this time.

The council is recommended to proceed with negotiations with landowners to acquire the pieces of land needed for the traffic scheme. They believe this may take a year to complete and will cost around £15,000.