

26th February 2013

Dear Colleague

Regarding the consideration of PE1236 at tomorrow's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee please find attached some information which will I hope aid your discussion.

The map shows that extraordinary 20 mile gap between Brechin and Stonehaven in which there is no bridge or underpass which allows traffic to safely cross the dual-carriageway.

The layout map of Laurencekirk shows that the existing development is in the south of the town and that future developments will be towards the north end of the town. There is therefore no prospect of developments near the south junction ever funding its upgrading.

Page 398 from the current Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan highlights that the south junction is an existing problem and that it is up to Transport Scotland to sort it.

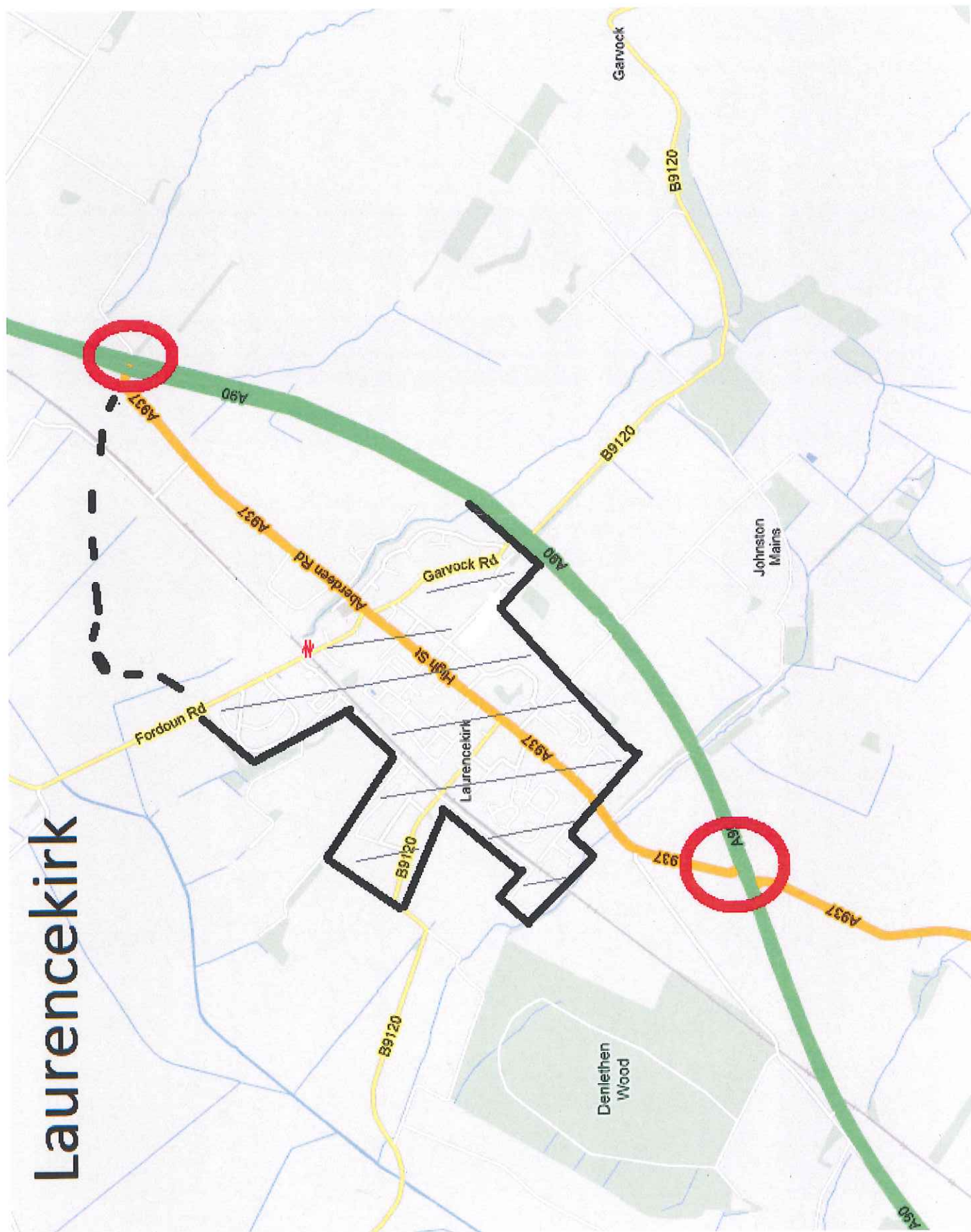
The final page sets out the disagreements between Transport Scotland and the local community, the local council and the regional transport partnership.

Nigel Don

MSP for Angus North and Mearns



Laurencekirk



in each settlement. Fordoun has a development of 15 houses proposed and so there is very little need for large scale employment land in that settlement. Laurencekirk is the main service centre, the main public transport hub and has the largest population base for the workforce: it is therefore more desirable and more sustainable to locate employment land in Laurencekirk than at Fordoun.

There is not an effective employment land supply in Laurencekirk. Site EmpB as allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan is constrained and it is proposed that this site be removed. There is very limited serviced employment land available within the settlement, the Employment Land Audit highlights that only 0.5 hectares of land are immediately available (see Employment Land Audit 2010 page 34). The scale of development being promoted in Laurencekirk is likely to result in a greater uptake of employment land in the settlement and allows cross-subsidisation of servicing costs. The plan will be reviewed in 5 years and if the take up of employment land is very low, reallocation could be considered. It is important to provide the opportunity for employment land as a part of a mixed use sustainable development.

Transportation

Site M1 utilises rail links, and meets paragraph 176 of Scottish Planning Policy as it 'promotes growth where it will make best use of current rail services'.

Consideration of junction improvements at Laurencekirk is ongoing and it is recognised that at least one grade separation will be provided by the development of site M1. Transport Scotland has completed a transport appraisal of development options at Laurencekirk (March 2010), which suggests that the development will require to provide junction upgrades to both the north and the south A90 junctions.

There is a road safety issue at the southern A90 junction, which has been an ongoing problem for a number of years. It is recognised that a grade separated junction is required to the south of the settlement to overcome this. However, site M1 cannot be expected to resolve an existing transport problem. Circular 1/2010 (paragraph 19) states that planning agreements should not be used to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision. In any case, the land values in Laurencekirk are not sufficient to afford both trunk road improvements, and may make development in Laurencekirk undeliverable. This would in turn lead to the reconsideration of the Government approved planning strategy for the whole of the south Mearns, and would result in a failure to make best use of multi-million pound investments by the Scottish Government in the rail station, and the proposed replacement of Mearns Academy.

As the road is a trunk road and consequently under the direct control of Transport Scotland, it is inappropriate for Aberdeenshire Council to "bring forward a strategy for junction improvements". Upgrading of trunk roads in response to demands is a matter for the Scottish Government, and in this it should have regard to paragraph 19 of Circular 1/2010 as noted above.

It is suggested by one respondent that allocation of site M1 fails to recognise the need to upgrade the southern junction. It is further contended that development should be directed to the most appropriate location, and not simply allocated to the south in order to facilitate junction improvements. In any case, development to the north takes strain away from the southern junction and would likely provide a material improvement to road safety at this point.

A distributor road will be required to serve site M1. Development of site M1 will not facilitate the distributor road around the west of the settlement, but will provide the first section between the A90 and Fordoun Road.

Deliverability

Laurencekirk requires substantial infrastructure provision for development to occur. Upfront funding of infrastructure by Aberdeenshire Council is being evaluated to assist development in Laurencekirk. The deliverability issues highlighted remain the same for any site within the settlement. Allocating one large site provides the advantage of critical mass. The alternative of developing a number of smaller sites has the disadvantage in that multiple developers and landowners would need to reach

Re PE 1236

Disagreement between Transport Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council about the need for a grade separated junction at Laurencekirk south.

Disagreement between Transport Scotland and NESTRANS about the trends in traffic flows at the Laurencekirk south junction.

Disagreement between Transport Scotland and the local community about the safety of the present junction.

No account being taken of the development plans for Laurencekirk which require the grade separated junctions to be built ahead of most of the development.

This junction has the only permanent 50 mph limit on the trunk road network.

Some data:

Laurencekirk population 2650 with >1100 more in Auchenblae, Luthermuir and Fettercairn.

Around 20 000 vehicles use the A90 daily

Around 5 500 vehicles cross the A90 daily at the south junction

These include 40 HGVs, 240 buses, and about 20 tractors and trailers

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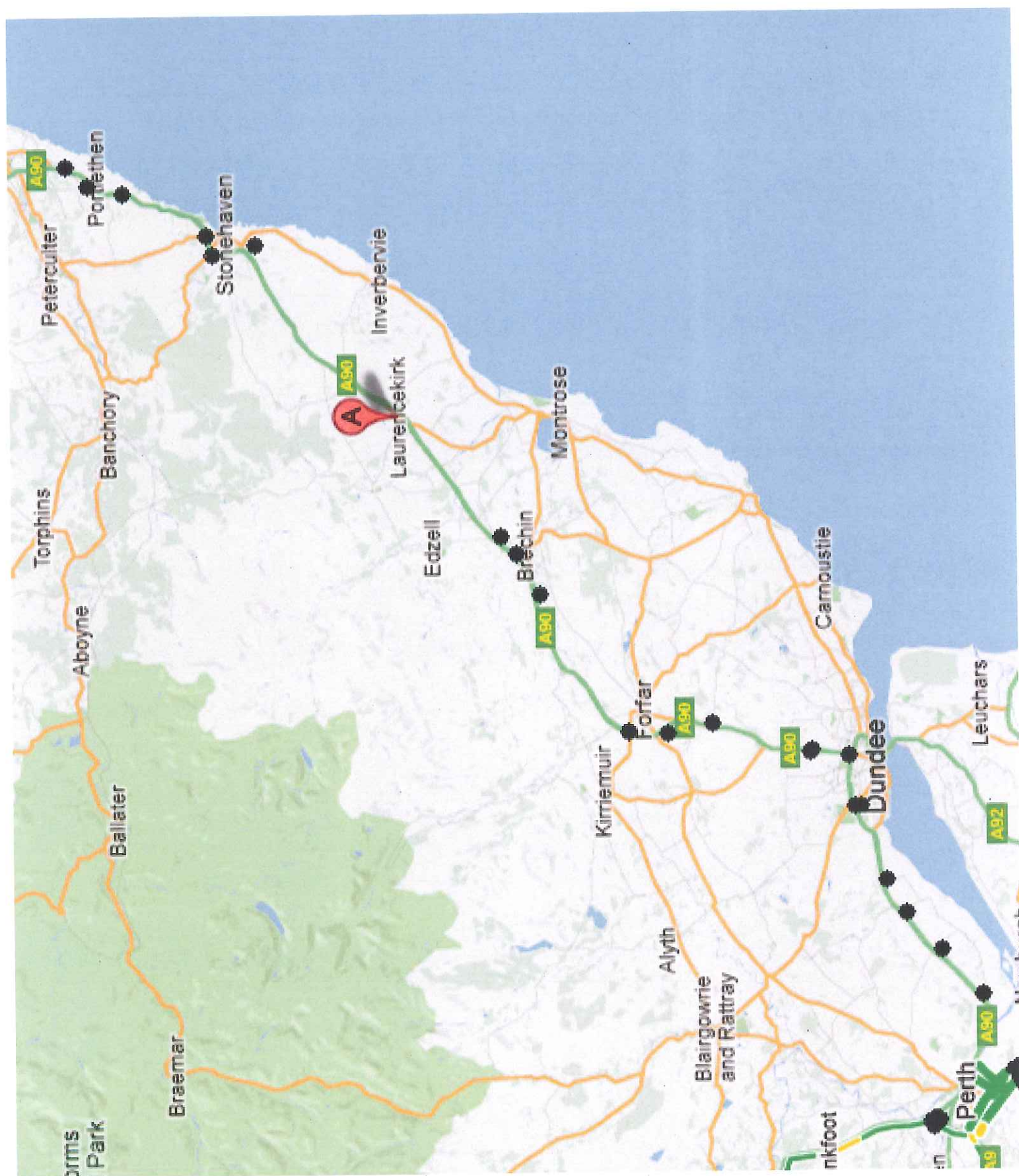
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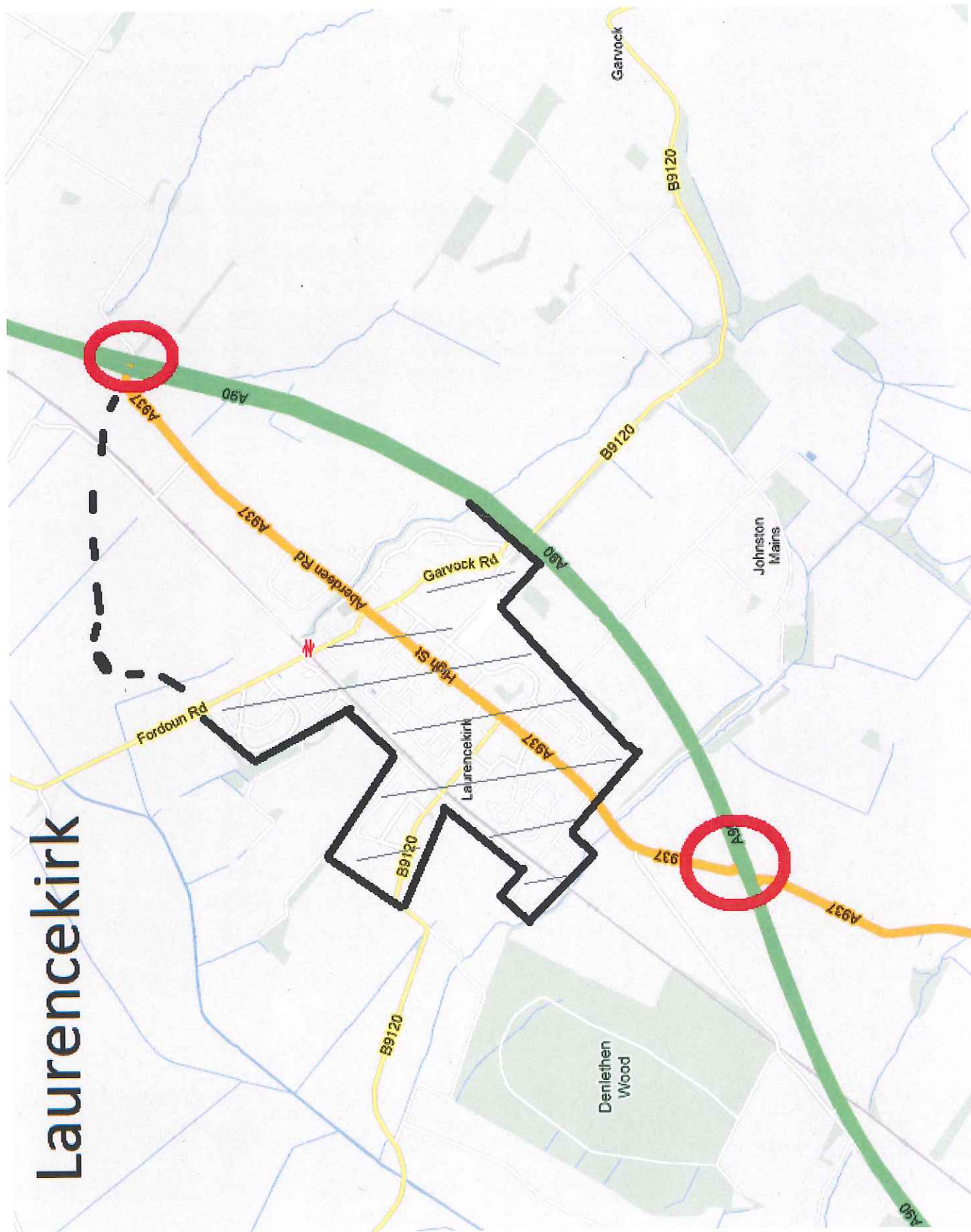
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