

Project	A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers	Project No.	117880
Subject	Community Council Forum – West Region	Date of Meeting	15 November 2016
Location	Ramnee Hotel, Forres		
Present	David Brownlees (DB)	Auldearn Community Council	
	David Shaw (DS), Carol Shaw (CS)	Dyke Landward Community Council	
	David Cook (DC)	East Nairnshire Community Council	
	Eleanor Hayward (EH), John Guthrie (JG)	Forres Community Council	
	Tony Pinner (TP), Brian Higgs (BH)	Finderne Community Council	
	Les Morgan (LM)	Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council	
	John MacIntyre	Transport Scotland	
	Mike Hodgson, Keri Stewart, Dave Gowans, Fiona Drever	Mott MacDonald Sweco (MMS) MMS	

Recorded	Distribution Attendees	
Item	Text	Action
1.0	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p>John MacIntyre, Project Manager for Transport Scotland, explained that this was the first meeting of the Community Council Forum for the West Region and that there would be further Forum meetings as the scheme progressed. However, if there were any significant developments before the next Forum he would advise the attendees.</p> <p>A presentation was given to the Forum by Transport Scotland and the MMS team. A copy of the presentation is attached to this Minute.</p>	
2.0	<p><b>Comments and Questions from Community Councils</b>  <i>(Response from Transport Scotland/Mott MacDonald Sweco in blue)</i></p> <p><b>Question:</b> DB – Does the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) require grade separated junctions?</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> BH commented that the use of grade separated junctions was not an absolute requirement of the DMRB, but was instead a decision made by TS and the Scottish Ministers.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The DMRB is a comprehensive manual which contains current design standards, requirements, advice notes and other published documents for trunk road design and will be used to design the Hardmuir to Fochabers Scheme as it is for other trunk road projects being taken forward by Transport</p>	

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	<p>Scotland. The A96 Dualling Programme is being taken forward in line with the Scottish Ministers' commitment to provide a high quality dual carriageway between Inverness and Aberdeen. One of the outcomes of the DMRB stage 1 assessment process was the decision to provide a high quality, Category 7a Dual Carriageway, where possible, with no central reservation crossings and grade separated junctions. This approach will improve connectivity, reduce journey times, and improve journey reliability and safety.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> DC expressed his concern at the number of existing bypasses which may be bypassed. He suggested that consideration should be given to upgrading the Forres Bypass.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Consideration will be given to upgrading the existing Forres Bypass along with other options as part of the route option appraisal process (DMRB Stage 2 assessment) that is currently being undertaken.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> DC noted that there are areas of flooding both to the North and the South of the existing A96 and that the Pluscarden area is prone to flooding too.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A Flood Risk Assessment will be carried out which will look at flood related impacts. This will be taken into account in the route option assessment process.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> BH asked if this forum is in line with Scottish Government Consultation Standards? He noted that Scottish Government consultations have a twelve week consultation response period.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Transport Scotland is only required to consult at the statutory processes stage but is committed to placing engagement with directly affected communities and other stakeholders at the heart of the development and delivery of its projects. Transport Scotland's approach to community engagement on the Dualling Programme is set out in the "A96 Dualling Programme - Engaging with Communities" which was published in May 2015. Transport Scotland is committed to undertaking a rolling programme of regular engagement to ensure those affected by the work are kept fully informed and their vital feedback taken into account. This programme of engagement commenced in November 2013 with a series of public exhibitions and will continue throughout the dualling programme.</p>	

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	<p><b>Post Meeting Note:</b> The twelve week period referred to in the Consultation Good Practice Guide (published in 2008) generally applies to consultation in connection with developing new policies and laws and their implementation. This would apply to consultations on potential new policy (such as the <a href="#">Consultation on proposals for regulations and policy supporting the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016</a>) rather than on-going consultation which takes place over many years.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> DB stated that Auldearn Community Council is happy to be kept informed throughout the design and assessment process.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> DC – How will access be provided to the railway station at Forres?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> All the options of dualling that are considered at Forres will take account of access to the railway station. For off-line dualling options we will give consideration to providing junctions on the east and west sides of the town and consider how they will connect to the local road network. We will seek to position junctions as close to towns as practicable to keep good access links.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> JG commented that Forres Community Council is currently liaising with Transport Scotland regarding the A96 junction near the railway station.</p> <p><b>Comments:</b> DB said that there were no obvious routes for the line of the dual carriageway. He noted that this is a divisive process and you can't please everyone.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> It is important to consult with groups and individuals to take account of information when making a decision on a preferred option. Decisions have to be evidence based, so that there is a clear rationale for why they have been made. It is possible that decisions may have to be defended at a Public Local Inquiry.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> DB noted that people in Auldearn feel that they were listened to by Transport Scotland and their design teams during consultation for the A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> LM – Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council tried to agree a common response but have made a decision that individual Community</p>	

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	<p>Councillors will respond. LM declared a personal interest in the scheme. He thought it was a good objective to have dual carriageway.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> LM – With the current economic turbulence, will there be money to spend on constructing the scheme?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Dualling the entire length of carriageway is one of the commitments made in the Infrastructure Investment Plan 2011, so the Scottish Government is committed to progressing this scheme.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> BH noted that end to end dualling of the A96 is not required on the basis of traffic flows.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Predicted traffic numbers have been assessed as part of the strategic business case for the route. This document showed that the proposal to dual the A96 is the best way to meet the future needs of those living, working and travelling along the corridor. The appraisal concluded that the full dualling of the A96 would deliver significant wider economic and accessibility benefits.</p> <p><b>Post Meeting note:</b> Traffic flows were only one of the factors that were considered in the decision to dual the full length of the A96. The Strategic Business Case, which was published in 2014, highlights that option 6 (full dualling) should be taken forward in preference to Option 5 (dualling of the most heavily trafficked sections). An extract from the Strategic Business Case recommendations which highlights this is:</p> <p>The appraisal demonstrates that Option 6, full dualling of the A96, would deliver significant wider economic and accessibility benefits. While the alternative Option 5 does offer slightly better value for money, it does not provide the consistency of carriageway standard and therefore does not deliver the best solution to meet the future needs of the corridor. Dualling the entire route provides the highest Present Value of Benefit (PVB) and the highest levels of wider economic and driver frustration benefits.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> DC – There are a number of pinch points along the A96 (Keith, Elgin, Nairn) – it would make sense to just deal with them. There is not enough traffic volumes to justify doing end to end. People would welcome a dual carriageway but would prefer to see pinch points dealt with.</p>	

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	<p><b>Comment:</b> DB – Rather than going over the justification for a dual carriageway it is better to focus on responding to the questions and issues and seeing that the process is done well.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> EH – A large amount of money is being spent on the railway link from Inverness to Aberdeen; and the Scottish Government advocate people leaving cars behind and using public transport; yet they are spending money on dualling from Inverness to Aberdeen – isn't this a contradiction?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland are investing in both road and rail schemes across the country. While dealing with pinch points would improve conditions locally, it would not provide the same level of benefits as the Scottish Government's commitment of providing a dual carriageway between Hardmuir and Fochabers.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> CS – Brodie residents really want to get the A96 out of Brodie. There are lots of HGVs going through the village and they are not always adhering to the speed limit of 50 mph. It would be very upsetting if Brodie didn't get a bypass.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> It had been noted that the general feedback received from the "Meet the Team" events was in favour of a dual carriageway.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> JG – We need better infrastructure to bring in business.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Good infrastructure and predictability of journey times is important for companies and the proposed dualling scheme will deliver this.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> DC – What is the situation in terms of valuation for Compulsory Purchase?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> The Scottish Ministers will appoint the Valuation Office Agency to assess the level of compensation due for property or land compulsorily purchased. The District Valuer and staff from the Valuation Office Agency will discuss the level of compensation with each landowner and/or their professional advisor. The assessment of compensation will depend on individual circumstances, but will ensure that individuals will get the fair market value at the time of vesting. The underlying principle is to put the landowner, in financial terms, so far as money can do so, in the same position as if property had not been taken. The assessment of compensation will take into account the value</p>	

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	<p>of property and the value of related effects (known as Severance, Injurious Affection and Disturbance).</p> <p><b>Question:</b> When will you come to update the Forums next?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> John MacIntyre explained that once the initial options have been identified in summer 2017 Transport Scotland and MMS will come back to consult with the Community Council Forums and the public.</p> <p><b>Question:</b> BH thought that was a long time to go and it would be good to get updates before then.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> If there is overwhelming evidence to rule out any improvement strategy before Summer 2017 then the team would come back with an update sooner.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> LM – You can get facts from the Community Councils that you otherwise wouldn't have – there is a lot of local knowledge available.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Transport Scotland and MMS welcome the receipt of additional information from Community Councils as it becomes available.</p> <p>John MacIntyre closed the meeting and thanked all Community Councils for attending.</p>	