

REPORT TO: THE MORAY COUNCIL ON 5TH DECEMBER 1996

SUBJECT: A96 FOCHABERS/MOSSTODLOCH BYPASS AND A96 KEITH BYPASS

**BY: DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL AND LEISURE SERVICES
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING**

1. Reason for Report

1.1 This report updates the Council on the current position regarding the Fochabers/Mosstodloch bypass and the Keith bypass.

2. Background

2.1 Members are reminded that a previous report was placed before this Council on 16th May 1996 (Minute Ref: Item 4, page 7, branch 15), and it was agreed that the views of the Council be conveyed to The Scottish Office and their Consultants.

2.2 The views on the Fochabers bypass proposals were that:

- the Northern route was the clear preference;
- the route should be to dual carriageway standards;
- the formal position on objection to other routes should be reserved pending the finalisation of the studies;
- the Council would wish to make further comments on the routes as these were prepared.

2.3 The Council also agreed that a report be submitted in due course on the provision of a bypass for Keith.

2.4 A further report on progress of A96 schemes was presented to the Technical and Leisure Services Committee on 6th June 1996 (Minute Ref: Item 9, page 12, branch 35) and, with other issues, it was agreed that a letter be sent to The Scottish Office expressing the Council's concerns and dismay at the time taken and lack of progress regarding the Keith bypass, which was the subject of a Public Enquiry in May 1993.

- 2.5 Accordingly, correspondence was sent by the Forward Planning Manager dated 29 May regarding the Fochabers/Mosstodloch bypass and by the Chief Roads Officer dated 19 September regarding the Keith bypass and the A96 trunk road as a whole. The Chief Executive wrote to the Scottish Office consultants for the Fochabers bypass on 22 August requesting further consultation. The Scottish Office responded on 10 September 1996 stating that they anticipated making a recommendation to Ministers shortly, and offered a further briefing to the Council following any decision.
- 2.6 The Chief Roads Officer requested information from the Scottish Office on the feasibility study for the Fochabers/Mosstodloch bypass in August this year, but was advised in September that although nearing completion, the study had not been recommended to Ministers on the line for the bypass. The Scottish Office's project engineer did, however, suggest that a further presentation could be made to this Council setting out the issues affecting the choice of route. This offer was acknowledged by the Chief Roads Officer on 16 September but to date no date has been suggested for this presentation.
- 2.7 Members will be aware that the proposed bypass line for Fochabers/Mosstodloch was announced in the House of Commons by Michael Forsyth on 20 November 1996, and that the route will follow the northern route. No timetable for implementation was announced.
- 2.8 The most recent correspondence dated 4 November 1996 received by the Chief Roads Officer from the Scottish Office project manager for A96 projects gives little information on the progress being made other decisions relating to the trunk road overall. The following information is however provided.
- the A96 Fochabers-Nairn section will be the subject of a future study and Moray's assistance in providing background information is acknowledged
 - over £4.5m has been spent on improvement schemes between Fochabers and Inverurie
 - two further climbing lane schemes are in preparation (both in Aberdeenshire)
 - the possibility of a traffic calming scheme in Keith is under discussion
 - construction of Dr Gray's roundabout in Elgin is about to commence
 - construction of a bus bay adjacent to Morrision Road, Elgin (Eight Acres) is about to commence.

This letter was received in reply to earlier correspondence which specifically requested updated information on the Keith bypass, but regrettably this information was not provided.

3. The Proposals

- 3.1 It is clear that apart from the recent announcement regarding Fochabers requests for information have been sent to the Scottish Office by Officers of this Council and others, but that no overall commitments are forthcoming.

3.2 It is therefore suggested that officials from the Scottish Office be invited to come to Moray and advise Members directly on the A96 route current progress and, if at all possible, the outcome of the decision regarding the Fochabers/Mosstodloch bypass and on the outcome of the Enquiry into the Keith bypass.

4. **Financial Staffing and Environmental Implications**

4.1 There are no financial, staffing or environmental implications arising from this report.

5. **Consultations**

5.1 None other than the correspondence noted previously.

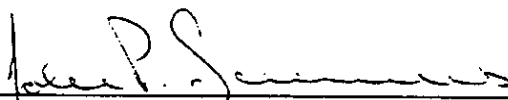
6. **EU Funding**

6.1 There is no claim for EU Funding arising from this report.

7. **Recommendations**

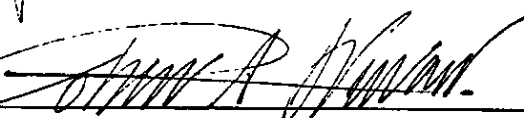
7.1 **The Council is asked to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the National Roads Directorate of the Scottish Office expressing concern over the delays in providing information on these bypass issues, and requesting an urgent meeting between appropriate Roads Directorate Officers and Members of this Council where hopefully both the decision regarding the Fochabers/Mosstodloch bypass can be presented and the outcome of the Keith bypass Enquiry can be reported, as well as general issues regarding the A96 trunk road.**

Author of Report: Chief Roads Officer
Background Papers: None
Ref: AR/PA/R/21/A96/7 R/21/A96/51

Signature: 

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