



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE ON
25 MARCH 1997**

SUBJECT: KEITH BY-PASS

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

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To advise Committee of the response by the Scottish Office to its representations on the Keith Bypass, and to suggest possible future action.

2. Background

2.1 At a presentation to the Council by the Scottish Office on 23 January 1997 it was announced that the Keith Bypass had been 'sisted' as far as the Scottish Office Trunk Road programming process is concerned. In effect, this means that the bypass is not being considered for inclusion with the Trunk Roads Programme.

2.2 The matter was reported to Full Council on 30 January 1997 (para 5 (I) of the minute refers) where it was agreed to write to the Scottish Office expressing disappointment at its decision not to proceed with the programming of the Bypass. The Council was particularly concerned regarding the continued adverse effects on the amenity of Keith and its people, and the continuing difficulties faced by users of the A96.

2.3 A reply was received from the Scottish Office dated 17 February 1997. It stated that "In a climate of continued public expenditure constraint, other priorities have reduced the amount of money available for roads spending, and some particularly difficult decisions have had to be made. Keith Bypass, due to low traffic flows on the existing road and the lack of congestion in the town, does not perform as well as other competing schemes in terms of value for money, and this situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future."

2.4 The letter goes on to say that "The making of the Road Orders will protect the line from development in the long term so that future reconsideration of the scheme is not ruled out. It will, however be necessary in that event to publish a new Compulsory Purchase Order."

2.5 The Keith Bypass is identified in both the Grampian Structure Plan (Transportation Recommendation 2) and the Moray District Local Plan (ED23), and the A96 as a

- (i) to the establishment of a voluntary Moray Coast Ranger service for an initial period of 12 months, subject to appropriate consultations as detailed in the report and that a report on the operation of the service be submitted to the Committee prior to the expiry of the initial period; and
- (ii) that a progress report be submitted to the Committee in three months.

8. DISCUSSION PAPER ON NATURAL HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Economic Development and Planning bringing to the Committee's attention a discussion paper published by the Scottish Office on Natural Heritage Designations and inviting the Committee to consider the terms of the discussion paper with a view to advising COSLA, who are co-ordinating a joint response from Local Authorities, of the Council's response.

Following consideration the meeting agreed to:-

- (i) note the range of Natural Heritage designations which currently exist;
- (ii) request COSLA to raise the following issues with the Scottish Office
 - that the number of Natural Heritage designations needs to be reduced
 - European designations could be grouped together under Natura 2000 sites
 - that the National Heritage designation should exist and bring financial benefits with it
- (iii) a copy of the report being forwarded to the Scottish Office; and
- (iv) the number and range of Natural Heritage designations being reassessed as part of the Structure and Local Plan review process.

9. KEITH BY-PASS

Under reference to para. 5(I) of the Minute of the Full Council dated 30th January, 1997 there was submitted a joint report by the Directors of Economic Development and Planning and Technical and Leisure Services advising the Committee of the response from the Scottish Office to the Council's representations on the Keith By-Pass and inviting the Committee to consider possible future action.

Following consideration the meeting agreed:-

- (i) to approach the Member of Parliament for Moray for her support in promoting the Keith By-Pass;
- (ii) to seek a meeting with the Minister responsible for Trunk Roads to promote the case for early programming of the By-Pass;
- (iii) to write to the new Member of Parliament for Gordon after 1st May, 1997 seeking his/her support in promoting the Keith By-Pass; and
- (iv) that given the A96 forms part of the Trans European Road Network [TERN] in Scotland to write to both Members of the European Parliament for the area seeking their support in promoting the Keith By-Pass.

10. THE SCOTTISH TEXTILE ASSOCIATION

There was submitted a report by the Director of Economic Development and Planning recommending that the Council takes Associate Membership of The Scottish Textile Association for the year 1997 at a cost of £300 to be met from the Economic Development and Planning Departments Assistance to Industry budget.