

**REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE 2 OCTOBER 2002**

**SUBJECT: A96 FOCHABERS-MOSSTODLOCH BYPASS**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**1. Reason for Report**

1.1 To advise Members of the latest developments in the progress of the trunk road scheme.

**2. Background**

2.1 Reference is made to the Minute of this Committee of 28 November 2001 (item 15 refers) when following consideration of the proposals for the bypass, and the draft statutory Orders, the Committee unanimously agreed to support the northern route subject to the conclusion of certain details as delegated to the Head of Direct Services in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair, Vice-Convenor and the two local Members.

2.2 Reference is also made to the Minute of this Committee of 16 January 2002 (item 12 refers) when it was reported that the points at issue had been progressed satisfactorily and that following consultation with the Members identified above, there were no longer grounds to consider any formal objection to the proposed bypass Order. It was also agreed that the same delegated authority be granted to progress discussions on outstanding traffic calming proposals.

2.3 To date these proposals have not been finalised and presented to the Council for consideration.

2.4 Officers of the Council were recently approached by the Scottish Executive to discuss alternative proposals for the section of the proposed bypass between the B9014 Spey Bay Road and the A98 Buckie roundabout. Work involved in undertaking the ground investigations was delayed because of Foot and Mouth outbreak precautions, and once this information was obtained and analysed, it was established that high ground water conditions in the vicinity of the Lake meant that the proposed road level would require to be raised. The principal features of these alternative proposals are:

- deletion of pedestrian footbridge
- alternative footpath access between Gordon Castle bridge and Home Farm underpass
- inclusion of additional community woodland
- new raised earthworks adjacent to proposed route to minimise noise and visual intrusion
- consideration of narrower bridge into Gordon Castle
- high wall between proposed road and Lake

2.5 The Scottish Executive, in acknowledging the impact of these changes, require to prepare an amendment to the Environmental Statement and alter the published Side Roads Order. To communicate these facts to the communities, it is their intention to hold another public exhibition in Fochabers and Mosstodloch in early October 2002. They would also be advising their list of standard consultees, and informing objectors. The Executive will outline the mechanism for commenting or objecting to these amended proposals.

### **3. Proposal**

3.1 The Committee is asked to note this development and await a further report on the consideration of the detailed amendments once they are received.

### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications directly from this report, unless a formal objection is considered necessary.

### **5. Staffing Implications**

5.1 There are no staffing implications directly from this report, unless a formal objection is considered necessary.

### **6. Environmental and Sustainable Development Implications**

6.1 There are no sustainable development implications for the Council from this project, however, it is assumed that the Scottish Executive has taken this into consideration in the promotion of the project.

### **7. Corporate Plan**

7.1 The construction of a bypass supports the Council's corporate objective of improving the existing roads network.

### **8. Consultations**

8.1 A McEachan, Senior Solicitor (Commercial & Conveyancing) Martin Wanless, Principal Planning Officer, Planning & Development and the Senior Engineer (Traffic) have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

**9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes these developments in the proposals for the A96 Fochabers-Mosstodloch bypass, and await a further report once the detailed information has been provided.**

Author of Report: Head of Direct Services  
Background Papers: None  
Ref: AR/PA/R/21/A96/7