

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Trunk Link Road (West Link) Working Group** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday, 10 November 2011 at 2.00pm.

### Present

Mr I Brown	Mr A Henderson
Mr P Cairns	Mr D Henderson
Mr J Crawford	Mr J Laing
Mrs M C Davidson	Mr R Pederson
Mr N Donald	Mr T Prag
Mr L Fraser	Mr H Wood
Mr J Gray	

### In Attendance:-

Mr N Gilles, Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services  
Mr S McNaughton, Head of Transport and Infrastructure, Transport, Environmental and Community Services  
Mr T Stott, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Service  
Mr C Howell, Project Design Unit Manager, Transport, Environmental and Community Services  
Mr J Smith, Principal Engineer, Transport, Environmental and Community Services  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service  
Mrs R Daly, Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

**Miss J MacLennan in the Chair (Items 1-3)**  
**Mr J Laing in the Chair (items 4-5)**

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr A S Park and Dr M E M Foxley.

### 2. Declaration of Interest

The Committee **NOTED** the following declaration of interest:

Item 5 - Mr T Prag (Non Financial)

### 3. Appointment of Chair

The Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chair.

The Working Group **AGREED** that Mr J Laing should be appointed as Chair.

### 4. Remit

At its meeting on 27 October 2011, the Highland Council had agreed that the remit of the Inverness Trunk Link Road Working Group would be:-

“To consider the outcome of the Options Appraisal and to make recommendations in relation to the preferred route(s) prior to further public

consultation” and “to consider the feedback from the public consultation and make recommendations to the Council of the preferred route(s)”

The Working Group **NOTED** the remit.

## **5. Inverness City Trunk Link Road – West Link, Stage II – Options Appraisal**

**Declaration of Interest: Mr T Prag declared a non financial interest in this item as a Member of Inverness Rowing Club but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in discussion.**

There had been circulated Joint Report No. ITLR1/11 dated 1 November 2011 by the Directors of Transport, Environmental and Community Services and Planning and Development which provided background on the design process for the Trunk Link Road (TLR) – West Link and provided information on the Options Appraisal process.

By way of introduction, the history of the proposal and the drivers for its provision, were explained. Members were reminded that the TLR – West Link, which would involve crossing the river Ness and the Caledonian Canal, had been submitted by the Council to the Scottish Government Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR). However, it had been unsuccessful and the Council had subsequently agreed to develop the design for the project and had included it in the Capital Programme which had been approved on 12 May 2011.

A stakeholder group of regulatory bodies had been formed to assist and guide the project through its design process and public consultation on five options had been carried out during winter 2010/11. Resulting from this consultation, a further three options had emerged which the public felt should be considered alongside the original five options.

The Working Group was provided with detailed descriptions of each of the eight options and it was confirmed that they all had been taken forward to Stage II design and for formal options appraisal. Each option had been assessed against the criteria identified in Stage II of the design process incorporating Part 2 of the Strategic Transport Appraisal Guidance document. The criteria were as follows:- environment, safety, economy, integration, accessibility and risk and uncertainty. Each of the criteria subdivided further and the purpose was to gauge accurately the major benefits and disadvantages of each option. Members were provided with information as to the organisations which had undertaken various elements of the appraisal and were shown the Matrix which had been used to map the results. The intention was for further public consultation to be undertaken outlining to the public the details of the options appraisal and to seek views in order to assist the Working Group in its deliberations, prior to making a recommendation to Council.

During discussion, Members considered each of the options. Amongst the various points taken into account were: the amount of land required, the estimated costs and how these might be met, the number of times the canal would be crossed and the impact on the surrounding road network. 2016 had been used as the year on which to base the traffic model and therefore took into account everything proposed in the Local Plan for the area at that time including the development of UHI campus and the new Asda supermarket. Future traffic modelling had also been undertaken at 5 year intervals and had incorporated

future land uses. As the road would free areas up for development Members were also of the view that it would be in order for developers to contribute, in part, towards the costs involved. In addition, it was also questioned whether or not there was a need for the road to be dual carriageway and, although it was not anticipated that this would be necessary in the next 20 years, capacity had been built in for this as and when the need arose. It was acknowledged that there was a danger of displacement and that existing Inverness businesses would relocate to this area rather than new ones being attracted. In addition, groups such as the Rowing and Golf Clubs and Jacobite Cruises would need to be relocated and discussion followed as to how disruption might be minimised by considering various alternative configurations. The impact on Torvean Quarry was also explored and information was sought as to why it was designated a SSSI.

The general consensus was, at this stage, that all options should be taken forward for public consultation. However, to better illustrate each option and to facilitate consideration, the importance of good visuals were emphasised and the use of montages and 3D modelling was suggested. It was also possible to demonstrate the scoring of the options on the matrix using a colour coded system but the view was that the "tick/cross" approach demonstrated the results in a clearer way. It had been suggested that a scoring system be adopted but, as the project was likely to be the subject of a Public Local Inquiry at some stage in the future, it would be better to use the same approach as the Scottish Government. Furthermore, the use of a scoring system would mean that different parameters would be given different weightings result in some parameters being of a higher priority to the disadvantage of others. Regardless, it was important that the background reports were also available to the public, wherever possible, to demonstrate the complexity involved in the appraisal. It was also important that the costs of each option be included so that the public could take this into account.

After discussion, the Working Group:-

- (a) **NOTED** the process for the Stage II Options Appraisal;
- (b) **NOTED** the outcomes of the Options Appraisal Process;
- (c) **AGREED** that information be provided to Members as to the rationale behind the SSSI status of Torven Quarry; and
- (d) **AGREED** to a further public consultation on the outcomes of the Options Appraisal, the feedback from which would be reported back to a future meeting of the Working Group in the new year.

## 6. **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group **AGREED**:-

- i. that, to consider the updated information on the Options Appraisal following feedback from the Working Group's initial briefing, the Working Group's next meeting take place on 17 November 2011 at 4.00 p.m.; and
- ii. in accordance with the timetable set out, another meeting take place on 27 January 2012 at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 3.55 pm.