

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**ROSS & CROMARTY EAST LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY**

**STATEMENT by HEAD OF TRANSPORT and INFRASTRUCTURE,  
TRANSPORT ENVIRONMENTAL and COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**ISSUES 1 & 30: The Black Isle Road Network,  
the Avoch to Fortrose Road and Fortrose High Street**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The following is the Statement from Sam MacNaughton, Head of Transport and Infrastructure at Transport Environmental and Community Services headquarters, in support of the case by the Director of Planning and Development

**2. Statement**

**The Black Isle Road Network**

- 2.1 The Black Isle Road Network serves an agricultural community as well as commuter settlements in Fortrose, Rosemarkie and Culbokie. Much of the network is of a low standard, compatible with agricultural requirements. The principal spinal route within the Black Isle is the A832 from Tore to Munlochy, Avoch, Fortrose, Rosemarkie and Cromarty. The principal secondary route is the B9169/B9163 from Leanaig near Conon Bridge, to Cromarty on the north side of the Black Isle. The west side of the black isle is bounded by the arterial A835 Trunk road and this route along with the A9 Trunk Road provides principal links to the north and south of the Highland Area.
- 2.2 Both the principal spinal route and the secondary route are, in the main, two track roads with adequate capacity for the levels of traffic that use them. The only exception to this is a short stretch of single track road between Balblair and Meiklewood, which lies midway between Culbokie and Cromarty. This is a narrow section of single track road which has had designs prepared and land acquired some time ago, but has never managed to find a place in the Council's Capital Programme.
- 2.3 Two track roads generally have a capacity of 15,000 to 20,000 vehicles a day. All roads on the Black Isle have traffic flows which are well below this threshold. The highest traffic volumes on the Black Isle are on the Tore to Fortrose road, which have vehicle flows in the order of 4,300 per day. The secondary route at Culbokie has traffic flows of just under 1,000 vehicles per day. All other roads in the Black Isle have traffic flows in the low 100's per day.

- 2.4 The principal commuter movement lies from Rosemarkie/Fortrose/Avoch to Inverness, though there is some commuter movement from Culbokie on the north side of the Black Isle as well.
- 2.5 At a tertiary level below these roads, lies single track agricultural routes serving the many farms which lie all over the Black Isle as well as forestry plantations. These roads have very modest flows serving small catchments of houses and are more that adequate for future requirements. The only exception to this may be improvements which require to be carried out as part of timber harvesting operations.

### **Avoch to Fortrose Road**

- 2.6 In terms of the Avoch to Fortrose section of the A832, this road has in the past been subject to rock fall and a short length chicane has been built into this road, to divert the road away from the adjacent rock face. A scheme has been designed for the complete length of road between Avoch and Fortrose, moving the road away from the adjacent rock face and although statutory consent is in place and land has been acquired, this improvement scheme has not yet been carried out. This scheme was first included in the Council's capital programme around 15 years ago. However, due to financial constraints the scheme is no longer included in the capital programme. The principal issue with this section of road is rockfall and safety and not the capacity of the road. The rockfall and safety issue is being managed and monitored to minimise risk.

### **Fortrose / Rosemarkie development**

- 2.7 There are proposals in the Local Plan for further development adjacent to Fortrose and concerns have been raised regarding the capacity of the road network to accommodate this housing. In terms of the Fortrose development, the A832 road has adequate capacity and capability of 15,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day, against the 5,000 to 6,000 vehicles per day which the road currently experiences during the summer months.
- 2.8 The only section of the A832 which may give cause of concern in relation to future development is a section through Fortrose village itself. Although this section of the road is of a two track standard, the alignment is quite poor and there is a considerable amount of parking on both sides of the road, which effectively reduces the road to a single track and passing place standard throughout its length. With vehicles parked on both sides of the road, and with the road acting as a single track and passing place road, the capacity levels drop to 1,000 to 2,000 vehicles per day. This is inadequate for the level of development which already exists and which are proposed for the area. It is therefore proposed that some modifications be applied to the road in the form of traffic management to ensure that it is able to operate at its two track standard.
- 2.9 Traffic management in Fortrose is particularly sensitive for the residents who live in this area, and we will require to take account of their requirements. It is suggested

that some form of parking be provided within Fortrose, but not on the A832 High Street itself. This could be in the form of Park and Ride at the east end of the village or parking in the vicinity of Cathedral Square. To supplement this, some form of traffic calming needs be introduced with gateways at both ends to ensure that the vehicles passing through the village will do so with care and consideration to pedestrians. The environment of the road can be further enhanced with suitable street furniture to engage motorists to ensure that motorists that are aware of pedestrian sensitivity of the route, which is passing through. In this way, two track capacity can be maintained, but traffic speeds can be dampened to a low level compatible with sensitive environmental surroundings. Further development will add pressure to the parking induced low capacity of this section of road and a suitable traffic management scheme needs to be designed and implemented prior to any significant additional development taking place.