

INVERNESS CITY – WEST LINK

PUBLIC CONSULTATION NO. 2

Extracts from the comments submitted by the public, landowners, Community Councils, and Sports Organisations

General

- The Highland Council need to think of the future of Inverness in 25+ years and not just the here & now by selecting the cheapest option to complete a road that will never be a bypass. (Ref. Con2/E024)
- Now that the Scottish Government has announced a £multi-billion programme for dualling the A9 and A96, it is essential that the Highland Council makes a further approach to them at the highest level to secure funding for the construction of whichever option is chosen, preferably option 7. As the new road will inevitably become a trunk road as soon as it is completed, the Scottish Government should be asked to divert a very small proportion of the sums they plan to allocate for the A9 and A96 dualling to this essential link in the trunk road system around Inverness, so that the Highland Council can reallocate funds they have set aside for the West Link to other long awaited essential improvements on regional roads. (Ref. Con2/E054)
- I think you might consider the extremity of the public reaction to a route that is anything other than what seems to be the absolute frontrunner. (Ref. Con2/E051)
- Perhaps moving the Council offices out of Inverness would go a long way to easing congestion. (Ref. Con2/E025)
- Any option involving Island Bank Road is OUT. It is a very narrow road and cannot be widened. (Ref. Con1/H415)
- Am I the only person who can remember being taught the predictions of the Brahan Seer and what would happen if another bridge were to cross the river? (Ref. Con2/H005)
- The Head of Transport seems to be hell bent on destroying our few green areas and his comments in the press lead me to believe the public will have no say in the outcome. Provost Gray and his councillors should wake up and listen to the people who care about Inverness before it is too late. (Ref. Con1/H506)
- By investing in road schemes like this the Council is failing to address the issues of climate change and peak oil. The money would be better spent on improving low-carbon public transport and locally accessible facilities. (Ref. Con2/E069)

- Only 30 per cent of the traffic using the A82 in Inverness is through-traffic; the majority is local. Highland Council should focus on reducing local traffic. For example, investing in better bus services, establishing some decent cycle lanes and making neighbourhoods safe for children to walk to school. It is a fact that if you build more roads you get more traffic. The West Link is unsustainable and sends the wrong message about the Highlands. Funds earmarked for this road would be better targeted at education, care of the elderly and low carbon transport. (Ref. Con1/E005)
- I would suggest a vote on the Options take place in May at the time of the Council Elections if a decision has not been reached before then. Tourism is a growth industry especially to the West so HRC should get moving. £22m + 5m from developers Scottish Gov could provide the rest. Inverness has an SNP Minister in situ so a big push needs to be made. (Ref. Con2/H020)
- Little need for a road. No proof of need given at exhibition. (Ref. Con1/H142)
- Looking at the future you should ensure that the new bridges are wide enough for future dual carriageway – the existing A82 swing bridge should be replaced to match the new and not 'patched up'. (Ref. Con1/H019)
- The main point is to get on with the job as it is on the cards for at least (15 years) do not wait till it goes up another few million. (Ref. Con2/H036)
- Representation of pros/cons in the table in the public handout seems to be of impacts without mitigation. Therefore extremely misleading and not appropriate, and likely to mislead reader, possibly skewing responses to your consultation. (Ref. Con2/E126)
- The STAG document has many inaccuracies in it. The plus and minus values attributed to headings vary depending upon which page you look at in the document. Option 7 has been scored unnecessarily harshly and comments made to make it appear less favourable that are not accurate. (Ref. Con2/E135)
- Think wisely before you act and think of the future, not your bank balance which never came into the picture when certain council staff were made redundant with large redundancy packages then re-instated on massive salaries. (Ref. Con2/E143)
- Any proposal that does not include a bypass for Clachnaharry does not make sense. If the link from the roundabout on the Dores road went further South, with a bridge over the canal to the South of the new 'Loch Ness House Hotel' then across the hill behind Craig Phadraig to drop down to the Beauly road near Mitchells, it would avoid the chaos and dangers in Clachnaharry, give a much more sensible link for the turmoil when the Kessock Bridge has to close for repairs or high winds (with tail backs on the Beauly road beyond Bunchrew on occasion). I realise this would mean a whole rethink and involve a lot of expense, and upset quite a number of landowners, but sadly, no-one in the Council seems to think laterally. (Ref. Con2/E149)

- After I went along to the West Link exhibition myself and my wife are VERY VERY disappointed with all the options you are considering. We feel that all the sporting facilities you are planning to bulldoze should be protected at all costs as to lose them would be a great disappointment to the people of Inverness and beyond. Inverness has few other recreational areas. (Ref. Con2/E154)
- I am writing on behalf of Friends of the Earth Inverness and Ross. We obtained 75 signatures in one afternoon for our 'Petition to save Whin Park'. We have subsequently received a further 34 signatures to our on line petition which can be viewed at http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/friends_of_the_earth_petition-to-save-whin-park/signatures. (Ref. Con2/E164)
- From a pedestrian safety perspective Island Bank - Dores Roads has very narrow pavements and areas of poor visibility, the risk of accidents will increase with options 1 to 6 and 8 due to the increased traffic and speed levels. (Ref. Con1/E158)
- It has taken years to build up the excellent leisure/recreational facilities at Whin Park, Canal pitches, The Aquadome, Queens Park Athletic - all of these facilities would be affected either directly through building on or through increased traffic use, congestion, noise, pollution, reduced parking for leisure facilities. All residents in and around Inverness, the Highlands, visitors to the area have easy access to this whole area whether they use private/public transport. Keep the green land for now and future generations. (Ref. Con1/E035)
- Previous councillors have turned a blind eye to the historical partial destruction of the Torvean Esker. Don't pass up the opportunity to embrace the challenges option 7 poses and transform what could remain of the Esker into a beneficial feature along the lines of the Falkirk Wheel. Have the courage to find the funding for option 7 and act in your citizens' best interests. Remember that this is a democracy and we the people have expressed our wishes. You have the power to render those wishes a legacy of honour and pride. (Ref. Con1/H109)
- If the existing Southern Distributer Road is not built to trunk road standards plans should be put in place to rectify this, in due course, in order that the whole route can then become a trunk road by-pass. (Ref. Con1/H098)
- It cannot make sense to design Phases 1 – 4 of the SDR as limited access road and then alter its function in Phase 5 as multiple access road from the Dores Road roundabout, where traffic intensity will be increased by virtue of new housing and shopping development. The Council should not be intimidated by the threat of successful Appeal in favour of early housing development at Holm, by developers. This is unnecessarily alarmist and could lead to short term expediency. It is imperative that the Council continue in dialogue with stakeholders and the local public to obtain the best possible solution to this long standing dilemma. (Con 1/H562)
- My friends and I love Whin Park. We don't want a road to spoil it or go near it. The park is lots of fun to play in there. It's healthy. I don't want the park to go. (Con 2/H043 from a concerned 5 year old)

- Forget the high level bridge idea – a medium level bridge with a lifting bridge over the canal, if elegantly designed, would be an attractive proposition. (Con1/H126)
- I am angry and disappointed that such a cursory summary of representations to 'Consultation No 1' was presented as part of 'Consultation No 2'. Given that I submitted in the region of 34 pages to Consultation No 1 I judge what is shown as 'Public Consultation No.1 Responses' as being totally inadequate. My negative experiences of participating in previous HC consultations also impaired my ability to contribute as positively as necessary for a consultation of this importance. (Con1/E025)

Costs

- The construction cost of a High level bridge is expensive, but I would argue the long term benefit would justify the initial outlay. All the other road layouts proposed would only provide a short term solution and would require further upgrade of the roads around the area. (Ref. Con2/E027)
- If the council cannot afford to build a suitable by-pass at this stage then it should not build one now but wait until funds can be sourced for an appropriate traffic management solution. (Ref. Con1/E173)
- I would suggest that the cost be revisited as I do not believe that 80M+ is correct having worked both within the civil construction sector and heavy construction / fabrication sectors this price seems too high, although I hope that once the scheme has been selected that the Council has enough sense to appoint a project manager that has a remit of reducing the cost as much as possible and not allow any not essential design changes, unlike most tax payer funded council projects that always run over on cost. (Ref. Con2/E022)
- If you can find £25m for another bypass maybe you should be spending it on services for the rural taxpayers who are suffering disproportionately. (Ref. Con2/E034)
- Selecting Option 7 when the money is in place (from whatever source) would make common sense. As the public have shown in surveys they have voted for something of quality not a cheap fix as proposed by our councillors and to satisfy the landowners/developers who are only interested in profit. (Ref. Con2/H011)
- The opening statement of the presentation clearly told people not to vote for more expensive options as they would not be fulfilled vis a vis funding. This not so subtle threat, which was repeated throughout the evening clearly undermines the democratic process and evaluation. As the presentation stated that a percentage of funding would be gained from developers for other options it was implied that this funding was not available for option 7. It should be clearly stated which funding sources are available for which options and at what percentages. (Ref. Con2/E035)

- If the money is not available for a crossing which avoids ruining the canal park / Whin park/ golf course area then my preference would be to go ahead with park and ride facilities, build a pedestrian bridge across the river just below the weir at the old concrete factory to the apex of the canal parks and run a fund raising campaign to secure the funds to do the right thing for the city i.e. find a way across direct from the Dores roundabout to the A82 through the quarry. (Ref. Con1/H111)
- Since, by the Council's own admission in the title, the route will effectively become the trunk road link between the A9/A96 and A82, further concerted pressure should be put on the Government (who fund trunk roads) to provide at least a large proportion of the necessary funding. (Ref. Con1/H098)
- Any 'West Link' is a bypass and should be funded by the Scottish Government. If the Scottish Government deems that traffic volumes are not sufficient to warrant construction of a bypass, then Highland Council should wait until volumes are high enough, and resubmit an application for Scottish government funding. (Ref. Con1/E163)
- The Government has just announced major investment for infrastructure. This scheme (Option 7) is ready to commence. Let the difference in cost come from this new investment and give residents and visitors the best for the Highland capital. (Ref. Con2/H029)

Option 7

- I would recommend using option 7 without the second swing bridge to reduce costs. (Ref. Con2/E032)
- The road from the roundabout at Dores Road (Tesco store) is already in place, and seems the best option, if the funds are not yet available, then they should wait till they are available. (Ref. Con2/H006)
- The addition of three roundabouts in the Tomnahurich area is a different project and costs for this should not be included in the funding for the above straightforward solution. (Ref. Con2/H023)
- Cost is a consideration, but why is there the need to have a second canal crossing near to Tomnahurich Bridge; this could be done without, saving money. The long term benefit of option 7 should outweigh the short term higher construction cost. (Ref. Con2/E057)
- If option 7 seems expensive, has that been seen in relation to the cost of the permanent destruction of the very attractive area around the islands that the other options would bring - how much value is being placed on this? The costs of this project should be viewed in the long term, over the life time of the proposed structure - seen in this way I think option 7 provides good value for money. (Ref. Con2/E067)

- I can see many disadvantages to this option and very few points in its favour. Quite apart from the unaffordable cost (which I hope will in the end rule it out), it is clear that such a major work cannot be justified by the predicted traffic volumes. Furthermore, as a route from the east side of the city to the west or vice versa it is not convenient, taking the traffic over the canal just to bring it back again, and adding to the traffic on the stretch of Glenurquhart Road between the projected junction with the new road and the existing canal crossing. (Ref. Con1/E016)
- Option 7 has a 21st Century look to it. It is a true distributor route and keeps traffic out of the residential areas on Dores Road. (Ref. Con2/H029)
- Option 7 is the only sensible way forward for the link road. All the others total waste of time and money. In thirty years time if any other option is chosen designers and planners will ask where did these fools get their training and what happened to their common sense? (Ref. Con1/H434)
- To reduce the cost of Option 7, we believe that the height of the bridge over the river and canal crossings could be reduced and that the proposed tandem canal bridge at Tomnahurich may have to be considered as a separate project when additional funds become available. (Ref. Con2/H034)
- I welcome the public consultation of the various options for the West Link route. However I found the Options Appraisal Summary Table misleading, as many of the impacts could be mitigated. The table only provides information on the impacts before mitigation. Therefore the table does not reflect the residual impact of each option, which means the assessment of impacts is misleading. The distinction between unmitigated 'gross' impacts and residual impacts after mitigation is very important when consulting with the public, many of whom may not be familiar with the concept of mitigation and how impacts could successfully be mitigated and so impacts significantly reduced. (Ref. Con2/E101)
- Having attended the Highland Council presentations and proposed options I presently have absolutely no faith in Highland Council planning department to listen to what the residents want, which is option 7. Furthermore I'm very disappointed that our so called local councillors have failed in the most abject way to uphold local democratic rights. Sadly, this has resulted in the complete breakdown of democracy in Inverness and has created a number of pressure groups to fight the case for option 7. (Ref. Con1/E103)
- If the town officials ignore the clear wishes of the majority who are in favour of option 7 then it will be a sad day for democracy and will not be forgotten at the next council election. (Ref. Con2/E045)
- The HC appraisal seems to be stacked against Option 7 which gives it a poor environment rating (for crossing a disused quarry and none of the city's green space) and unnecessarily including a second crossing of the canal at a cost of around £11M. (Ref. Con2/E114)

- This (Option 7) will save the last of the green areas of the town for the future of our children as the council seem hell bent on destroying it for some hidden agenda. The council do not seem to listen to the people who live in the city of Inverness, but to the big businesses of the city and area, it feels that our voices will not be heard above theirs. If the council look to the future it will see a bridge over the canal and river will help the town prosper and not is another poor decision. The plan 6 was put forward over 20 years ago and is outdated already, let us hope they come up to date with proper planning ideas and not take backward steps. (Ref. Con2/E142)
- I read in the Press & Journal that a Highland Councillor said the lack of a 'link road' was partly to blame for the pedestrian deaths from vehicles in the city and that a link road must be built in haste. Yes we agree, let us reduce pedestrian deaths on our city streets and therefore build a 'by-pass', not a 'link road' as it is now conveniently called. It is ironic to conclude that by building a network of trunk or distributor roads within an area historically and predominantly used by pedestrians - will result in less pedestrian deaths! Only a by-pass would do that and that is option 7. (Ref. Con2/E146)
- The minimum cost of £67.8 million compares with the funds which we understand the council presently have for the project of £22.5 million. Not only would the selection of Option 7 kill the whole West Link project for ever, it will, at the same time, give rise to serious claims for loss of amenity and development potential running into tens of millions of pounds because the land will be blighted by the adoption of this proposal, a proposal which in our view would never be able to be implemented. (Ref. Con1/E174)
- I feel that this is the only sensible long term option as, it will decrease the amount of traffic travelling along Dores Road therefore keeping it safer for children and adults enjoying the walk into town. This option leaves some of the most scenic and family friendly parts of Inverness intact - once these have been removed they can never be replaced! (Ref. Con2/E157)

Option 6

- 1. Riverside route will reduce traffic along Dores Road into town. 2. Has minimal impact on Whin Park if any. 3. Impacts on golf course but there have always been provision in past local plans to relocate that part of the course to the other side of the A82. At the same time will make available to the general public, not just golfers, more land for general use. It has also been suggested in the past that the rugby pitches could be relocated 4. Affordable. 5. Could be completed within a reasonable time scale. (Ref. Con1/E013)
- This must be the fifth or sixth time in the last 30 years that the public have been consulted on a route that was first confirmed in the 1982 adopted Inverness Local Plan, then in the 1994 Inverness, Culloden and Ardersier Local Plan, and again in the Inverness 2006 Local Plan, all after an extensive Public Inquiry debates. Over that period much time and money has no doubt been spent by Council officials, members and their consultants on investigations and consultations. This demonstrates that there has not been "undue haste", contrary to the views of the Inverness Civic Trust chairman. (Ref. Con1/E071)

- I would like the council when developing the option 6 proposal further to take heed of the importance of the area around Holm for recreation - possibly by providing a replacement path network (not just pavements adjacent to the carriageway). (Ref. Con1/E098)
- This option is broadly in line with the option identified in the 2006 Local Plan which was only adopted after the proposed route was the subject of intensive consideration at Public Local Plan Inquiry following which it was confirmed both by the Reporters and the Council. This confirmed the position as set out in the 1993 Local Plan. (Ref. Con1/E174)
- Option 6 would all allow for construction of part of the West Link Road across land at Ness-side, which is identified for residential purposes in the Inverness Local Plan for a notional 500 units. By advancing Option 6 the Council would be in an excellent position to deliver the 1st phase of the road and release development land in accordance with the Local Plan. The Council are currently proposing a start date for the Western Link to begin in 2014/ 2015. Delays to this, particularly at the southern end could jeopardise delivery of allocated housing land and significantly affect the Council's housing land supply obligations. (Ref. Con1/E081)
- It has been demonstrated that the construction of the Western Link through the Ness-side site has a number of major advantages. It is considered that the new West Link is not essential for the delivery of housing on the Ness-side site and that current access and highway arrangements and road capacity can accommodate at least 500 units, subject to a Transport Assessment. If the road link is delayed, it is therefore the intention to submit a planning application and proceed to a Public Inquiry if necessary. (Ref. Con1/E081)

Recreational Areas

- I like the idea of moving the Golf Course to the north side of the A82 and see no reason why this should not be done ahead of the second canal crossing and as soon as funding is available. The redundant part of the golf course on the south of the A82 should be allocated to green space/recreation. (Ref. Con1/E122)
- The presentation did not make clear if the cost of relocating the rugby and golf facilities had been included in the budget calculations or if this would be an additional expense. (Ref. Con2/E035)
- As someone who has put many years into supporting and administering sport over the years, my view is that it would be catastrophic to bring traffic through the current sporting centre of Inverness. The area attracts many children and adults for sporting purposes and should be protected from traffic density increases. (Ref. Con1/H025)
- It also seems to have been conveniently forgotten that the lands of Bught Estate were left to the people of Inverness for recreational use only. (Ref. Con2/H015)