

Agenda Item	11
Report No	HC/31/13

Inverness West Link

Final Road Layout, Planning Application, CPO Plans and Schedule

Report by Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services

Summary

This report updates Members on the outcome of the Inverness West Link Stage 3 Consultation, and invites Members to approve the final road design which will be used for the Inverness West Link planning application, and as the basis of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

Members will note that the City of Inverness Area Committee considered these proposals at their meeting on 12 August 2013 and made a recommendation to the Council that the revised layout drawings, as contained in **Appendix A**, are used for the Inverness West Link planning application, and as the basis for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the scheme (**Appendix B**).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Highland Council, at its meeting on 1 March 2012, agreed that Option 6, as recommended by the Working Group, should be adopted as the preferred route for the Inverness West Link (Report Ref HC-74-11).
- 1.2 The Council also agreed to work with all relevant stakeholders and ensure the enhancement of the recreational and sporting facilities in the areas around the Bught and Torvean.
- 1.3 Following a procurement process Capita Symonds (Consulting Engineers) was appointed to take forward the detailed design of the project.
- 1.4 The project is now at Stage 3 of the design process where the details of the road layout are to be finalised following public consultation. The Stage 3 consultation took place between 15 April and 31 May 2013 and included public exhibitions and displays held on 17 April 2013 at Kinmylies Church, 18 April 2013 at Culduthel Christian Centre, and 4 May 2013 at the Eastgate Centre, as part of the Pre-Application Planning process for the Inverness West Link project.
- 1.5 The City of Inverness Area Committee considered the proposals set out in this report at their meeting on 12 August 2013 and made a recommendation to the Council that the revised layout drawings, as contained in **Appendix A**, are used for the Inverness West Link planning application, and as the basis for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the scheme (**Appendix B**).

2. Project Drivers

2.1 Members will be aware that there are a number of significant drivers for this project which are becoming increasingly important in supporting the continued economic growth and development of the City. These drivers are:

- Land Use and Economic Development
- Capacity of River Ness Bridge Crossings
- City Centre Congestion
- Complete the Inverness Southern Distributor
- Expand and encourage Active Travel and Public Transport

2.2 An assessment of the project drivers would indicate that early delivery of the project is essential. The project is no longer a long term objective related to long term planning. The Inverness West Link will provide essential infrastructure that needs to be delivered in the short term to support the continued economic development of the City of Inverness, and the wider region.

2.3 Land Use Development

The Inverness West Link has been included in the Council's adopted local plan for many years. It is required as essential infrastructure to open up land to the south and west of Inverness which is zoned for residential development. Without the West Link in place the radial routes into the City centre will face increasing pressure from generated traffic and this will have a consequential detrimental effect on existing properties. The Inverness West Link, as a primary distributor road, will allow this traffic to be dispersed laterally, relieving pressure on the radial routes.

2.4 Bridge Capacity

There are currently 3 road bridges over the River Ness, these are:

- Black Bridge Built in the 1880s, this is an old bridge with a 7.5 tonne weight restriction.
- Ness Bridge a 4 lane bridge built in 1961
- Friars Bridge a modern dual carriageway bridge built in 1986

At peak times, particularly during the evening commuter period and the summer months, these bridges suffer from heavy congestion and this leads to extensive delays for all traffic in the city centre. In the event that major maintenance works is required to any of these bridges then Inverness will suffer unavoidable gridlock.

2.5 Traffic Congestion

The city centre of Inverness suffers from severe traffic congestion during the summer months with the influx of tourists and visitors. The increase in traffic results in severe traffic congestion in the city centre, and creates delays for essential business travel and emergency vehicles. Providing additional capacity

over the River Ness will remove unnecessary traffic from the city centre, along with fumes and noise; making the city centre a more pleasant place for shoppers and pedestrians.

2.6 Complete the Inverness Distributor

The original feasibility study for Inverness Southern Distributor was completed in 1974 and has been included in the Council's local plan for many years.

Much of this distributor has already been constructed and only the East Link and the West Link are outstanding. The Scottish Government has agreed to take forward the East Link as part of their Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), and the Inverness West Link is being taken forward by the Council.

The completion of the Inverness Southern Distributor is essential for the continued development and expansion of Inverness. The Inverness West Link is designed to primary distributor road standards and will complete the distributor road to the south and west of Inverness providing relief for local traffic.

2.7 Active Travel and Public Transport

The Inverness West Link supports the Local Transport Strategy in providing increased opportunities for cycling, walking and greater use of public transport. As well as reducing the number of vehicles on our roads, active travel has very positive benefits in relation to health and wellbeing.

Increased opportunities for active travel will encourage a modal shift out of cars to more sustainable transport and thus provide relief from congestion, fumes and noise within the city centre. The project, as part of the Strategic Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) process, identified outcomes to promote a number of sustainable transport initiatives linked to the City's Active Travel Network, and these are incorporated within the project.

3. **Design Process**

3.1 The design of the Inverness West Link project follows the design process as contained in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) which is used throughout the UK for major roads projects.

3.2 The design process for major projects comprises three stages of design:

- **Stage 1** – This stage covered option generation and sifting and the results were presented to the public for consultation in December 2010. Following comments from the public the 5 original options were expanded to include an additional 3 options (including Option 6). The 8 options were then carried forward to the Stage 2 of the design process.
- **Stage 2** – This stage covered the detailed Options Appraisal of the 8 options which were carried forward from Stage 1 of the process. The Options Appraisal considered a range of impacts, including the environment, safety, economics, integration, accessibility, social inclusion

and risk and uncertainty. The results were presented to the public for consultation in 29 November 2011 and 1 December 2011. The outcome of the detailed Options Appraisal was presented to the Highland Council on 1 March 2012 when the Council agreed to adopt Option 6 as the preferred route.

- **Stage 3** – This is the current stage where the preferred option is being worked up to detailed design with an associated land footprint all of which will be taken forward to obtain the necessary consents to allow the project to be built. These approvals include planning consent and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for acquisition of the necessary land.

3.3 This report focuses on Stage 3 of the design process, and the revisions to the detailed design which have been made in response to the comments received during the Stage 3 consultation which was held between 15 April and 31 May 2013 and included public exhibitions held on 17/18 April and 4 May.

3.4 In addition to the processes set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), a Stakeholder Group, with representatives from the regulatory bodies has been established to assist with the development of the project. The Stakeholder Group comprises officials from:

- Historic Scotland
- British Waterways
- SEPA
- SNH
- Transport Scotland
- The Highland Council

3.5 This is an innovative approach which helps to identify any major impediments to the project, within the terms of the statutory regulations, at an early stage in the project development.

3.6 The Stakeholder Group have been involved throughout the process and are continuing to advise the Council with the development of the project.

4. Design Changes

4.1 The Stage 3 consultation was held between 15 April and 31 May 2013 and included public exhibitions held on 17/18 April and 4 May. A total of 152 comments were received from the public and various organisations and details of the comments received will be contained in A3 booklets available in the Member's lounge prior to the meeting. These comments are laid out in tabular format and where these comments have impacted on the design the response of the project team is incorporated in the Table.

4.2 This has been a very positive part of the process and has given the public, sporting organisations, and other affected bodies the opportunity to influence the final design. Many of the comments received have been helpful and have been incorporated in the final design as presented in this report.

- 4.3 There is a requirement as part of the project, to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) based on ecological surveys and the impact of the project within the site. This EIA has led to a refinement of the design in particular areas incorporating details on the plans not originally envisaged.
- 4.4 The EIA for the Inverness West Link is substantially complete and is being expanded to include the Torvean Golf Course, Sports Hub, Kilvean Cemetery Extension and Parkland proposals, a series of interlinked projects which are the subject of a separate item. This expanded EIA will provide an integrated approach to the West Link project and the related recreational enhancements and will be incorporated within the planning process prior to determination.
- 4.5 Discussions with landowners and leaseholders have also raised issues which impact on the scheme layout. These issues have now been taken account of in the detailed design.
- 4.6 Following a Charrette by the Planning Authority a new development brief has been prepared for the Torvean and Ness-side which incorporates opportunities for recreational enhancement as well as residential development in the area. This has led to some changes in the road layout.
- 4.7 Areas where the design has been refined following input from the public consultation, EIA, Development Brief as well as discussions with the landowners and the key Stakeholders are as listed below:
- Skew Bridge over the River Ness (this was originally a right angled bridge);
 - Additional widening the bridge over the River Ness to allow for continued operation during future maintenance;
 - Removal of roundabout and smoothing the alignment on the north bank of the River Ness;
 - Extensive buffer landscaping and planting alongside the new road at Ness-side and the Canal parks;
 - Roundabouts enlarged and incorporating improved deflection to satisfy DMRB standards;
 - Surface water drainage incorporated in a positive drainage system leading to a SUDS pond prior to discharge into a watercourse;
 - High strength piled foundations below new canal bridge east abutment to accommodate soft material encountered in soils investigation boreholes.
 - General Booth road distributor relocated further east along with revised location for roundabout and further adjustments to take account of the sports hub/ golf course and improved land use allocations;
 - Underpass below A82 trunk road in vicinity of General Booth road;
 - Impact on accommodation works arising from landowner and leaseholder discussions.
 - New pedestrian underpasses and ramps adjacent to Queens Park;
 - New footpath/cycleway connections to Underpass on A82;
 - Pedestrian controlled crossing on the A82;
 - Layby at Ness Side;

- Footway link to canal tow path just north of River Ness;
- Amended ramps to Whin Park;
- Bus Layby amendments on General Booth Road;
- Noise mitigation adjacent to Canal Parks;
- Junction improvements at Glenurquhart Road/ Bught Drive;
- Short term footway/cycleway link from Dores Road;
- Two passing places on Bught Road.

4.8 The layout drawings incorporating the detailed design, landscaping and cross-sections in Appendix A includes the design refinements detailed above.

4.9 Some surveys and assessments which are still on-going and may yet influence the finalised detailed design, prior to construction, are:

- Soils investigation boreholes in the River Ness for the central piers (these were carried out in July/August 2013 to satisfy environmental requirements).
- Further Badger surveys to clarify in detail the exact nature of the badger habitat.

5. Estimated Costs

5.1 The estimated cost for the Inverness West Link at Stage II of the design process was £27.2M. This estimate was based on outline quantities and estimates of construction prices in early 2011. This estimate has now been updated to take account of more detailed quantities, construction inflation and the design changes.

5.2 Within the estimated cost an allowance had been made for the cost of the works associated with providing “like for like” replacement of sporting and recreational facilities affected by the works, including the relocation of the Golf Course, relocation of the Inverness Blitz, and interim arrangements for Highland Rugby Club.

5.3 The estimated cost also includes an allowance for risk and optimism bias and these factors have been adjusted in the revised estimate to take account of the additional information available when compiling the finalised detailed design.

5.4 The revised estimate will be used for informing the Council’s Capital programme, the planning consent process, the CPO, and also any Public Local Inquiry (PLI) which may be required.

5.5 The updated estimated cost for the Inverness West Link is contained in the following Table. The revised estimate cost for the project incorporating the updated detailed design is £34.398m (July 2013 prices).

PROJECT ESTIMATED COST (£m)

Estimate Cost 2011		27.226m
Inflation period	(14.39 %)	3.918m
Design Adjustments		3.254m
Revised Estimate at July 2013		34.398m

- 5.6 The Table below provides details of revised cost estimates for each of the 8 options considered at Stage 2 of the STAG process but excludes any design adjustment since these have not been assessed. These are therefore a conservative estimate of the true costs.

TABLE OF ESTIMATED COSTS FOR OPTIONS 1 to 8 (£m)

	option 1	option 2	option 3	option 4	option 5	option 6	option 7	option 8
2011 Estimate	23.461	27.283	29.201	31.828	30.557	27.226	67.754	75.481
2013 Estimate	26.837	31.209	33.403	36.408	34.954	31.144	77.504	86.343
Design Additions	not assessed	not assessed	not assessed	not assessed	not assessed	3.254	not assessed	not assessed
TOTAL						34.398		

- 5.7 As part of the planning process there will be an element of planning gain that will contribute towards the cost of the project. These contributions will lie in the range £3.5m to £4.5m and the final details of this will only become clear as these developments are taken forward. Planning gain contributions have not been incorporated in any of the gross costs of the project identified to date within the STAG process.

- 5.8 It should be noted that these contributions will only be realised following implementation of developments and this is dependent on build out rates for housing and other developments in this part of Inverness.

6. Landowners

- 6.1 All of the landowners affected by the project have been contacted and have been advised of the revised design development proposals.

- 6.2 Landowners have been helpful throughout the design development of the scheme

in providing access to land and details of title plans and land boundaries used in the CPO plans. Negotiations with landowners will continue in parallel with the CPO process utilising the services of the District Valuer.

- 6.3 Some land owners own land which is zoned for development in the local plan and discussions with these land owners and their agent in relation to any future planning applications follows the normal process as required through planning consultation prior to lodgement of an application.

7 Statutory Consents

- 7.1 To allow the project to be delivered the Council will require a number of statutory approvals/consents for the project. These approvals will use the revised layout plans shown in **Appendix A**.

- 7.2 Any detailed planning application for the project will follow the procedure and process of a major planning application. The application will include all the details shown on the drawings including cross-sections, landscaping, SUDS drainage systems and bridge profiles. Also included with the application will be an expanded EIA as identified in paragraph 4.3 and 4.4 above and this EIA will be finalised with additional survey information prior to any planning determination.

- 7.3 The Caledonian Canal is a Scheduled Monument. Since the works impact on the Caledonian Canal there is a requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for the works. A Scheduled Monument Consent application has been prepared for submission to Historic Scotland and this will be submitted in parallel with the planning application. Historic Scotland has been kept fully informed at all stages of the project and the details on the layout drawings will not be unfamiliar to them.

- 7.4 The new road scheme will require a number of Road Traffic Orders and these will include:

- Stopping up Orders
- Speed Restrictions
- Re-determination of Public Rights of Passage

These will be published nearer the time of construction following receipt of planning consent and the conclusion of the CPO processes. The Traffic Orders will follow the normal process used for such Orders.

- 7.5 As part of the Inverness West Link Project it is proposed to reclassify the Inverness Southern Distributor Road as an A route since when complete it will provide a link between major arterial A routes serving the city. This reclassification will follow the normal process through Transport Scotland and be implemented nearer the time of construction.

- 7.6 The Great Glen Way pedestrian route traverses the section of the project at the A82 and Bught Road. A minimal diversion of the route is required and the details for this have been discussed with Scottish Natural Heritage and they have confirmed that a revision to the Great Glen Way Order is not required in this instance.

8 Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

- 8.1 It is proposed that The Highland Council promote a Compulsory Purchase Order under the Roads (Scotland) Act to acquire the land and servitude rights necessary for the Inverness West Link Project. It is considered that a Compulsory Purchase Order be promoted to assist the Council in achieving ownership and servitudes of all of the land required to allow construction of the project to start timeously. The project, when delivered, will bring benefits to the City of Inverness in the form of reduced congestion, improved capacity for transport and traffic across the River Ness, assist development and land use strategy for the City, encourage opportunities for active travel and help complete the Inverness Southern distributor, a project commenced many years ago.
- 8.3 The Council will seek to purchase the land required and obtain servitudes with landowners' agreements. The Compulsory Purchase Order and the land purchase compensation negotiations, which will be undertaken by the Inverness District Valuer, will run in parallel. If the negotiations on compensation with a landowner reach a successful conclusion and the Council take title to the land by agreement then this will supersede the requirement to include the respective area of land in the Compulsory Purchase Order.
- 8.4 The land required for the West Link Road is shown on the CPO plans and is owned by several individuals and companies all as detailed in **Appendix B**. The Compulsory Purchase Order is to be entitled The Highland Council (Inverness West Link) Compulsory Purchase Order 2013.
- 8.3 Council is invited to resolve to make a CPO for the land required for the Inverness West Link.

9. Recreational Enhancement

- 9.1 Following the Council's decision to work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the enhancement of the recreational and sporting facilities in the areas around the Bught and Torvean, officials have been exploring how these facilities may be enhanced as part of the opportunities which arise from the new Inverness West Link. The West Link Road has been the catalyst and springboard which will allow this exciting development to move forward.
- 9.2 The area around Torvean, Bught and Canal Parks already supports a wide range of sporting and recreational activities, and the Inverness West Link road provides a unique opportunity to enhance these facilities to create a Sports Hub for Inverness and the Highlands, and much of this is covered in the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief.
- 9.3 Much work has already been done in discussions with the Golf Club, the Rugby Club, and the Rowing Club in developing proposals for quality recreational and sporting infrastructure in this area. A planning application in principle consultation has already been held for the sports hub and golf course. As a result of this consultation and input from organisations and members of the public the area

covered in the application is to be expanded and reissued for consultation prior to an outline planning application being made covering a larger area. The revised recreational and sporting area will also include land for a future extension to Kilvean Cemetery and parkland.

- 9.4 The Council aspirations for this area are an exciting development for recreation and The Council plan to work with the many sporting clubs in and around Inverness to ensure that no opportunities are missed. The Council will explore opportunities for external funding to maximise investment in this area and reach towards the aspirations of the sporting fraternity for quality infrastructure.
- 9.5 Based on the design work and indicative layouts already prepared the projected investment for sporting and recreational infrastructure in the area lies in the range £6m to £9.5m. These are gross figures, which will be reduced as opportunities for external funding become clearer and are realised. The details, of course, need to be developed further with onsite ground surveys and detailed design based on consultation with the various clubs, many of whom have an interest in the proposed sports hub and golf course. It should be noted that advance negotiations to acquire additional land for the project are underway and the outcome of this along with further details on the project will be presented to committee in due course.
- 9.6 Although the sport hub and golf course lie principally to the north of the A82 there is an opportunity as part of the road scheme to ensure that the area around Torvean lying to the west of the Caledonian Canal is fully integrated with the proposals. As part of the new road layout a new pedestrian underpass is proposed under the A82 Trunk road. This will provide a segregated link for pedestrians and cyclists joining up both sides of the A82 trunk Road avoiding the need for pedestrians to cross the road at grade.

10. Project Timetable

- 10.1 It is proposed that the Planning Application for the Inverness West Link will be lodged and notice of the making of the Compulsory Purchase Order will be advertised towards the end of September 2013.
- 10.2 The overall works will require to be carefully phased to ensure that all businesses and sporting activities can continue to operate throughout the period of road construction and this will require some advance works. It is proposed to build the new road in two Phases.
- | | |
|---------|---|
| Phase 1 | Dores Road Roundabout to Glenurquhart Road (A82) including the new crossing of the River Ness |
| Phase 2 | The new Caledonian Canal crossing, including the tandem bridge arrangements at Torvean |
- 10.3 Phase I of the project is still on programme and on schedule to commence construction in 2015.

11. Implications

- 11.1 The Inverness West Link project is included in the Council's 10 year capital programme, as approved by the Council on 27 June 2013.
- 11.2 In relation to legal there are implications in relation to land acquisition and these will be dealt with through the normal process which will involve the Scottish Government and the District Valuer. It is proposed that in order to progress land acquisition a Compulsory Purchase Order will be published and this will run in parallel with the land acquisition.
- 11.3 In regard to equalities the design will take into account access requirements for individuals with disabilities and good practice for vulnerable users.
- 11.4 The project will help mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing traffic congestion, improving journey times and support active travel through cycling and walking and thereby reduce the carbon footprint for traffic in and around the City of Inverness.
- 11.5 The risk implications are being managed through standard project management procedure and a risk register as required by good practice.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1 Members are invited to approve the layout drawings for the Inverness West Link, as contained in **Appendix A**, and authorise the making of a Planning Application and a Scheduled Monument Consent Application for the Inverness West Link.
- 12.1 Members are invited to resolve to make a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire all of the land required for the Inverness West Link, as detailed in **Appendix B**, and authorise the Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to advertise the CPO and take all necessary steps to obtain title.
- 12.3 Members are invited to authorise the Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services to undertake negotiations through the District Valuer of any claims for compensation and costs payable to owners, lessees and occupiers of the land required for the Inverness West Link.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date: 20 August 2013

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