

Graham A (Alasdair)

From: Graham A (Alasdair)
Sent: 04 May 2017 13:02
To: Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
Cc: Rennie M (Michelle); PS/Transport Scotland; Brannen R (Roy)
Subject: RE: A96/Bennachie

Tracking:	Recipient	Delivery	Read
	Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work	Delivered: 04/05/2017 13:02	Read: 04/05/2017 13:04
	Rennie M (Michelle)	Delivered: 04/05/2017 13:02	
	PS/Transport Scotland	Delivered: 04/05/2017 13:02	
	Brannen R (Roy)	Delivered: 04/05/2017 13:02	

On behalf of Michelle please find below lines as requested in relation to A96 Dualling and Bennachie. Should Mr Brown require any further information please let me know.

Regards

Alasdair

**A96 Dualling East of Huntly to Aberdeen
Bennachie**

Top Lines

- I am indeed aware of the concerns expressed by Save Bennachie campaign along with the concerns of others in the area in relation to our ambitious programme to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen.
- Transport Scotland is currently at the very early stages of the dualling design and assessment process for the section of the A96 east of Huntly to Aberdeen with no route options having been developed at this stage.
- Route options will be developed at the next stage of the design and assessment process, which for the section between east of Huntly to Aberdeen is expected to start later this year following the procurement of Consultants. We currently expect that this work will take approximately 2 years to complete and will include an engineering, environmental, traffic and economic assessment of the potential impacts of each option developed to inform a preferred route option choice.
- As for all our major road schemes, I would like to reassure you that meaningful engagement with communities forms a key part of our work as we develop our plans. The work we are progressing along the A96 includes a rolling programme of regular engagement with local communities and other stakeholders to ensure that communities, businesses and individuals affected by the work are kept fully informed and their vital feedback taken into account.
- I would also like to reassure you that the output of the preliminary work we have completed, including the feedback received following the exhibitions held in May 2015 will be carefully considered during the next stage in the design and assessment process. This will include the feedback received from Save Bennachie Campaign and all other concerned parties.

Background

The Scottish Government is committed to dualling the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. This significant undertaking requires careful, in-depth planning and design so we deliver the right scheme and help tackle congestion, make journey times more reliable and, crucially, improve road safety for all along the route.

Transport Scotland is currently at the very early stages of the dualling design and assessment process for the section of the A96 east of Huntly to Aberdeen with no route options having been developed at this stage. They have been taking forward preliminary work (DMRB Stage 1) on this programme and the outcome of this was displayed at public exhibitions held in May 2015. This preliminary assessment is the first stage in a multi-stage development process where Transport Scotland has examined high level Improvement Strategy Options.

It is important to note that the Improvement Strategies (Options B, C, D and N) presented at the exhibitions held in May 2015 are different high level approaches to providing a dual carriageway between Inverness and Aberdeen, for example a bypass north or south of towns along the existing A96. These improvement strategy options are illustrations of what such choices may mean and do not represent specific corridors or route alignments, and therefore do not represent the exact locations where the upgraded A96 may be located.

Route options will be developed at the next stage of the design and assessment process (DMRB Stage 2), which for the section between east of Huntly to Aberdeen is expected to start later this year following the procurement of Consultants (procurement process to appoint a consultant commenced in January 2017 – tenders are due to be returned by the end of May with an award expected this summer). We currently expect that the route options assessment work will take approximately 2 years to complete following the appointment of a consultant and will include an engineering, environmental, traffic and economic assessment of the potential impacts of each option developed to inform a preferred route option choice. Thereafter the preferred option will be developed in greater detail (DMRB Stage 3) leading to the publication of draft Orders for formal comment.

As for all our major road schemes, meaningful engagement with communities forms a key part of our work as we develop our plans. The work we are progressing along the A96 includes a rolling programme of regular engagement with local communities and other stakeholders to ensure that communities, businesses and individuals affected by the work are kept fully informed and their vital feedback taken into account. The output of the preliminary work, including the feedback received following the exhibitions held in May 2015 will be carefully considered during the next stage in the design and assessment process. This will include the feedback received from Save Bennachie Campaign and all other concerned parties.

As Transport Scotland progress to this next stage of development further public consultations will be undertaken as part of our rolling programme of engagement. This will form a key part of the process in developing and assessing route options along with subsequent stages of assessment.

Alasdair Graham

Head of Planning and Design
Major Transport Infrastructure Projects
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED]

Transport Scotland, the national transport agency
Còmhdhail Alba, buidheann nàiseanta na còmhdhail

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From: [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
Sent: 04 May 2017 12:21
To: Rennie M (Michelle)
Cc: PS/Transport Scotland; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
Subject: A96/Bennachie
Importance: High

Michelle,

Mr Brown is looking for a bit of quick advice. He's been getting some pressure from MSPs and Local Councillors about Bennachie and the potential impact of A96 on that.

He's asked how far he is able to go in saying that it will be protected? Can you offer advice on that and perhaps a line that he can use when asked about it again?

Helpful to get that by close of play today if possible.

Thanks

[REDACTED] | Private Secretary to Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work
The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG | Web: www.gov.scot
Tel: [REDACTED] | Mob [REDACTED] Email: CabSecEJFW@gov.scot

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