

2 Need for the Scheme

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The existing A737 through the town of Dalry is subject to several constraints which adversely affect road geometry and consequently traffic operation. The existing road is subject to significant and frequent congestion and delay at peak times.
- 2.1.2 On approach from the north of the town the A737 follows a steep downhill gradient with a low standard of horizontal curvature. Continuing southbound the A737 crosses over the River Garnock and then, in close proximity, crosses beneath the Glasgow to Ayr railway line through a bridge with restricted height clearance.
- 2.1.3 The route through the town centre itself is restricted by available carriageway width along the shop fronted New Street to the traffic light controlled junction with Townend Street. The A737 continues into Townend Street, requiring Trunk Road traffic to manoeuvre around a limited width 90 degree turn. The Trunk Road continues along Townend Street with a downhill gradient and following a curved alignment to cross the Caaf Water, a tributary of the River Garnock, at the southern end of the town. Throughout the length of New Street and Townend Street several side roads form junctions with the Trunk Road.
- 2.1.4 The A737 STAG Appraisal Report, prepared in March 2006, summarised the key issues on the existing route as follows:
- Congestion and delays caused by conflicting demands and interests on the road network in Dalry.
 - Congestion caused by bridge strikes and lack of observance of warning signs, relating to restricted height clearance for A737 traffic under the existing railway bridge.
 - Community severance caused by the A737.
 - Diversion/displacement of traffic to avoid restricted bridge clearance.
 - Poor layout of minor junctions.

2.2 Policy Framework

- 2.2.1 The Proposed Scheme is supported through a number of key transport and environmental policies as described below.

National Planning Framework 2

- 2.2.2 The National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2), published in June 2009, sets out the long term spatial strategy for Scotland's Development. It sets out the key principles and the Government's priorities for the system to guide policy formation and decision making towards the goal of sustainable development and economic growth.

2.2.3 Paragraph 108 of the NPF2 sets out the strategic outcomes identified in the Scotland's National Transport Strategy (Scottish Executive, 2006):

- improving journey times and connections – to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety;
- reducing emissions – to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on high level objectives for protecting the environment and improving health; and
- improving quality, accessibility and affordability – to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car.

2.2.4 Paragraph 112 of the NPF2 states that there is a need: *'to tackle congestion and improve public transport links between and within our cities. Improved connectivity can help unlock the potential of priority areas for regeneration such as the Clyde Corridor and Ayrshire, enabling more people to become economically active. Improvements in transport infrastructure are needed to support economic activity and improve access to facilities and services in our rural areas. It would be important to ensure that key locational decisions and the investments in transport infrastructure necessary to support them help to move us towards a more sustainable, low carbon economy.'*

2.2.5 The Proposed Scheme represents an improvement in the existing transport infrastructure, improving integration in transport, reducing congestion, and improving journey times in accordance with the NPF2. The Scheme would alleviate the physical severance resulting from high traffic flows that currently exists in the town centre of Dalry and promote better access to community facilities. It would also benefit public transport (bus services) in Dalry, as the reduced traffic load in the town centre would reduce journey times for buses travelling through it.

Scottish Planning Policy

2.2.6 The Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (Scottish Government, 2010) is a statement of Scottish Government policy on land use planning. With regard to transport, SPP advise that tackling congestion will support sustainable economic growth and reduce emissions. It also recognises that improvement to active transport networks, such as oaths and cycle routes, in urban and rural areas will support more sustainable travel choices – cycle routes should be safeguarded and enhanced where possible.

2.2.7 The Proposed Scheme would reduce congestion and traffic related emissions in Dalry town centre as strategic traffic would use the new bypass. A safe dedicated crossing point of the National Cycle Network Route would be incorporated into the scheme, which would be an improvement on the current situation. The route of a potential off-road cycle route would be retained by the Proposed Scheme.

Strategic Transport Projects Review

2.2.8 The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) (Scottish Government, 2009) sets out key transport proposals that are considered to, individually and in combination, support the Scottish Government's purpose to create a more successful country through increasing sustainable economic growth. The STPR identifies where the strategic transport network in Scotland can be improved through more effective operation and maintenance, making better use of existing capacity, or implementing targeted

infrastructure enhancements. The STPR covers a 20 year period, and is therefore subject to the availability of resources in future spending reviews.

- 2.2.9 The STPR supports both the National Planning Framework 2 and the delivery of the three strategic outcomes identified in the Scotland's National Transport Strategy (see paragraph 2.2.3 above.
- 2.2.10 The Proposed Scheme supports two of these key outputs in tackling congestion in Dalry and improving journey times for users of the A737 and also through improving air quality and traffic noise pollution in the town centre.
- 2.2.11 Intervention 22 of the STPR recommended targeted road congestion/environmental relief schemes. This includes enhancements on the A737 such as a bypass of Dalry which would help to reduce the conflict between local and strategic traffic that occurs along this route, thus improving road safety and journey time reliability on the A737.

North Ayrshire Structure Plan (Adopted 2007)

- 2.2.12 Policy Trans 1 Land use and Transportation states that Local Authorities shall ensure that:
 - All significant new trip generating development is closely linked to existing and proposed walking, cycling and public transport network.
 - All appropriate measures are promoted to minimise any negative environmental impacts of road traffic.
 - Accessibility to local services is maintained and improved by the integration of transport networks linking services.
- 2.2.13 The Proposed Scheme provides relief from existing severance and would therefore result in an improvement in the integration of existing transport networks linking services. The physical severance resulting from high traffic flows in Dalry town centre would be removed, and bus services would improve as a result of reduced journey times. Overall existing transport networks through Dalry would therefore function better, with benefits to both vehicle users and non-motorised users and communities would have improved access to existing facilities.
- 2.2.14 Policy Trans 3 Strategic Road Development supports the delivery of improvements to the A737, including the Dalry area, and states that:
 - Priority should be given to the study and, if appropriate, the promotion and development of: - Upgrading the A737 between Kilwinning and Horwood.

2.3 Scheme Objectives

- 2.3.1 The scheme design aims to satisfy the following specific objectives:
 - Improve the level of service and safety by reducing the effects of driver stress and journey times.
 - Eradicate the conflicts between long distance users and local traffic on the road network.

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- Stabilise the average peak hour journey time over a prescribed length of the A737 through Dalry throughout the 25 year study horizon using October 2004 conditions as datum; without detriment to conditions in Dalry Town Centre.
 - Stabilize average bus journey times through Dalry at peak hours in future years using October 2004 as datum.
 - Wherever practicable incorporate measures for non-motorised users. In particular, cycling proposals shall be designed in accordance with the “Trunk Road Cycling Initiative” which supports the Sustainable Transport (SUSTRANS) Millennium National Cycle Network.
 - Mitigate the environmental impact of the new works where possible.
 - Achieve good value for money for both taxpayers and transport users.