



An agency of  SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

A90 Balmedie to Tipperty

Route Options Public Exhibition Report

August 2006

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Report Status: Final

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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	EXHIBITION MATERIAL	1
3	EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE	2
4	ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES	2
5	INTEREST GROUPS	7
6	FINDINGS	8
7	CONCLUSION	9
	Appendix I – Exhibition Brochure and Questionnaire	10
	Appendix II – Exhibition Material and Photographs.	14
	Appendix III – Press Cutting	17

1 INTRODUCTION

Transport Scotland, assisted by Carl Bro, are promoting a scheme to upgrade the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty to dual carriageway standard. The scheme is called the A90 Balmedie to Tipperty.

Four alternative route options, colour coded as red (Option 1), blue (Option 2), green (Option 3) and pink (Option 5), were displayed at a public exhibition held in Balmedie at the White Horse Inn over two days at the following times:

Thursday 15 th June 2006	12.00pm – 8.00pm
Friday 16 th June 2006	12.00pm – 8.00pm

Adverts were placed in the Press and Journal, The Ellon Times and Aberdeen Evening Express to inform the public about the Public Exhibition.

Preview invites were issued to MSP's, MP's and Councillor's to attend the exhibition prior to the public at the following times:

Thursday 15 th June 2006	11.00am – 12.00pm
Friday 16 th June 2006	11.00am – 12.00pm

Attendees were issued with a brochure and questionnaire detailing information relating to the project and asked to complete and return the questionnaire no later than 7th July 2006.

See Appendix I for exhibition brochure and questionnaire.

2 EXHIBITION MATERIAL

The exhibition material on display, as replicated in Appendix II, included an introduction and background to the scheme, environmental baseline, existing constraints and individual plans of each route option. For each option significant environmental issues were highlighted i.e. planning issues, land usage, cultural heritage, ecology, landscape and visual effects, traffic noise and vibration consequences.

Estimated traffic effects for potential year of opening (2010) for all route options and a do-nothing scenario were displayed. Also, recently conducted noise surveys were presented to show a baseline situations and changes associated with each route option.

3 EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE

Upon arrival attendees were asked to sign the exhibition visitors book and indicate on a plan the location of their property, if applicable, to gauge the source of interest. The visitor's book reveals the following attendance:

Thursday 15 th June 2006	91
Friday 16 th June 2006	122
<hr/>	
Total	213

Whilst every effort was made to encourage visitors to sign the visitor's book this is an underestimate of the number that actually attended. Visitors attending in couples tended to sign the book for each household rather than individually. It is estimated that there was a total in excess of 350 attendees at the exhibition.

From the location map used at the exhibition to gauge the source of interest it was noted that approximately two thirds were from the local area. Other interest came from regular users of the A90 route.

4 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The questionnaire was subdivided into a series of questions which provided the public with the opportunity to express their opinion. These included the opportunity to comment on the routes exhibited, indicate their preference and add any factors or local issues which should be taken into account

The first section of the questionnaire provided information on those attending the exhibition. It allowed landownership details to be updated and confirmed if the interest in the scheme was from a local level.

Where people returned both questionnaires and a letter or email both were combined to avoid double counting of views. A total of 112 questionnaires were returned by the requested date along with 24 letters or emails. The total number of responses was 136, the results from which are discussed below.

4.1 Section 1: Do you own, rent or occupy a property which is within or adjacent to the routes being considered?

For this analysis local interest was taken to be landowners or tenants within 1km of the route options or those within the local communities of Balmedie, Foveran and Tipperty. Those in Belhelvie, Newburgh, Ellon or further a field were classified as being of regional interest.

Analysis of the 136 responses received is summarised below:

	Response Total	Percentage
Property Interest Within or Adjacent to any Route Option "Local Interest"	106	78%
No Property Interest "Regional Interest"	30	22%
Total	136	100

These findings indicate that there was a high level of local interest in the scheme.

4.2 Section 2: Indicate your most preferred route. If no preference, please state.

Analysis of all the returned questionnaires and letters indicates that there was a preference for Option 5, with Option 1 receiving the least support. A relatively high percentage of responses did not indicate or state a preference for a preferred option.

	Response Total	Percentage
Mainline Option 1	10	7%
Mainline Option 2	31	23%
Mainline Option 3	29	21%
Mainline Option 5	42	31%
No Preference	24	18%
Total	136	100%

Further interrogation of the above responses revealed the difference between local and regional interest.

	Local Interest		Regional Interest	
	Response Total	Percentage	Response Total	Percentage
Mainline Option 1	7	6%	3	10%
Mainline Option 2	23	22%	8	27%
Mainline Option 3	19	18%	10	33%
Mainline Option 5	36	34%	6	20%
No Preference	21	20%	3	10%
Total	106	100%	30	100%

An analysis of the local interest results with their relationship between address and stated preference is shown below:

	Local Residents to the <u>EAST</u> of the existing A90		Local Residents to the <u>WEST</u> of the existing A90	
	Response Total	Percentage	Response Total	Percentage
Mainline Option 1 (Easterly Option)	5	5%	2	2%
Mainline Option 2 (Easterly Option)	1	1%	22	21%
Mainline Option 3 (Online/Easterly Option)	1	1%	18	17%
Mainline Option 5 (Westerly Option)	31	29%	5	5%
No Preference	8	7%	13	12%
Total	46	43%	60	57%

4.3 Section 3: Are there any factors you think should be taken into account?

A review of the responses to this question found that there were a number of concerns related to personal perspectives with impacts on individual properties i.e. noise, visual, light pollution and property prices. Other views which were raised included environmental and community issues which have been summarised below:

Public Comment/Concerns		
	For	Against
Mainline Option 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected route from 1996 draft Orders Most direct Least impact on people and property Minimal disruption to wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposed to sea haar Cuts of pedestrians from beach Increased impact/closer to SSSI Impact on properties at Delfrigs Impact on mature woodland at Menie Estate More sites of historical interest to the east Richer and more diverse flora and fauna on east side Severance of Menie Lodge and the Estate.
Mainline Option 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most direct Least impact on people and property Minimal disruption to wildlife Least community severance Least impact on landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposed to sea haar Severance of Menie Estate Cuts of pedestrians from beach Increased impact/closer to SSSI More sites of historical interest to the east Richer and more diverse flora and fauna on east side Severance of Menie Lodge and the Estate. Impact on Trump's potential development
Mainline Option 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most direct Least impact on people and property People living by the existing A90 are used to the noise Least impact on forestry grants Least impact on Orrock House Listed Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposed to sea haar Severance of Menie Estate Cuts of pedestrians from beach Increased impact/closer to SSSI Negative impact on existing properties adjacent to the on-line upgrade section of this option More sites of historical interest to the east Richer and more diverse flora and fauna on east side Severance of Menie Lodge and the Estate. Impact on Trump's potential development

<p>Mainline Option 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most direct • Least impact on people and property as further away from individual properties • Least impact on "working" farm used for livelihoods rather than hobby farming • Avoids areas of mature woodland • Least impact on sea view and coastal zone • Natural seem of rock on west rather than low lying land • Less complex side roads • No impact on Trump's potential development • Potential for and future widening works can be accommodated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed to snow • Impact on land recently enhanced for recreational/leisure walks and riding at Aikenshill (Scottish Forrestry Grant). Option cuts through two forestry grant schemes • Impact on new ponds at Dambræ (SFG) • Visual impact of new road over existing A90 • People to the west have bought their houses thinking it was to be on the east side of the existing road • Would have impact on more individual small holdings rather than large farms • Increased travel for Newburgh traffic heading south • Greatest impact on agricultural land • Creation of a blind summit over Aikenshill • Increase noise as road on high ground
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over only one junction at Balmedie location to the south. Why not north of Balmedie? • B977 realignment link road severs farm and creates future development land • traffic within Balmedie will increase due to single exit at south on to dual carriageway • Pedestrian access to Belhelvie and footpath links throughout the scheme • Noise pollution and safety during construction • Impact on farms 	

5 INTEREST GROUPS

Further to earlier consultations with landowners various interest groups have formed in order to show local opposition to some of the proposed options.

Currently there are two main groups. Go-West Campaign are an interest group formed by residents to the east of the existing A90 and are opposed to ANY easterly route option. A further interest group from the west side of the existing A90 have formed who are opposed to the proposed westerly route.

Both groups, although opposed to certain route alignments, recognise the need for the new road and gladly welcome the upgrade.

To date the groups have generated the following support:

	Campaign Against an EASTERLY Route	Campaign Against a WESTERLY Route
Signatures to Date	93	59

From the total 152 signatures on the two campaign lists some also returned questionnaire responses. In order to avoid double counting signatories on the campaign list who also returned questionnaires/letters have been removed from the analysis of the campaign lists. This results in the following:

	Campaign Against an EASTERLY Route	Campaign Against a WESTERLY Route
Signatures to Date	93	59
Signatories who Returned Exhibition Questionnaires	28	26
Deduced Petition Signatories	65	33

6 FINDINGS

This section examines the information summarised in the report and seeks to clarify the public's opinion on preferred route choice.

- The majority of interest in the scheme was from the local community with 78% of comments received for people within 1km of the route options.
- From all the responses received the most favoured scheme is Option 5, chosen by 42% of the respondents and Option 1 being the least favoured at 10%.
- In analysis of local interest it was found that Option 5 was favoured at 34% with Option 1 being the least favoured at 6% of the respondents analysed.
- Regional interest showed Option 3 to be the most favoured option, although all options scored closely.
- Local interest saw residents on the east of the existing A90 favouring Option 5.
- Local residents to the west of the existing A90 were more split in their preferences with Option 2 being favoured, closely followed by Option 3.
- Support from interest groups on both sides of the existing route saw greater support AGAINST an easterly route over the support AGAINST a westerly route.

7 CONCLUSION

From the analysis undertaken it can be seen that the overall respondent's preference is for Option 5.

From local interest the highest support is for Option 5, which outweighs the support for Option 2 which is then closely followed by Option 3. Option 1 is recognised as the least preferred.

APPENDIX I

Exhibition Brochure and Questionnaire



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Introduction and Background The existing A90 trunk road between Balmedie and Tipperty is part of the main transport corridor linking Peterhead and Fraserburgh with Aberdeen. Sections of the route immediately to the north of Tipperty and south of Balmedie are of dual carriageway standard, whilst the 8km section between Balmedie and Tipperty comprises a single carriageway that provides limited opportunities for overtaking.

A90 BALMEDIE TO TIPPERTY

ROUTE OPTION PUBLIC EXHIBITION JUNE 2006



The dualling of the A90 from Balmedie to Tipperty was previously progressed to Draft Orders stage in 1996. However, the Strategic Roads Review in 1999 contained the decision that the scheme was to be held in abeyance and considered alongside other emerging priorities for a future trunk road programme. In 2003 a multi-modal appraisal was undertaken using Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) which investigated the emerging problems on the existing transport corridor and highlighted the regular convoying that forms behind slower-moving vehicles on the A90 route. Taking into account the findings of this report the then Minister for Transport announced in June 2005 that the design work for the improvement to dual carriageway should be taken forward. He further stipulated that the route would be off-line and have grade separated fly-over junctions.

Since last June Carl Bro, together with their environmental sub-consultants Natural Capital, have been investigating route options for the dual carriageway. Consultations have been undertaken with statutory agencies as well as local landowners in determining a series of route options presented at this exhibition.



Specific surveys were conducted to examine the platooning effects experienced along the route during busy periods. The analysis of this problem established that the primary cause was slower moving lorries and lack of overtaking opportunities during busy traffic conditions.

Environment All options are located in an area of gently undulating agricultural land falling from the west to the coast. The landscape is more intimate to the south and open with expansive views to the north. The coast is an important area for nature conservation and some burns at the north end of the scheme would feed into the River Ythan Estuary which is designated as an area of European and National importance for its wildlife interests. Woodland is quite sparse in the area and is restricted to small woodlands and shelter belts round farms and properties.

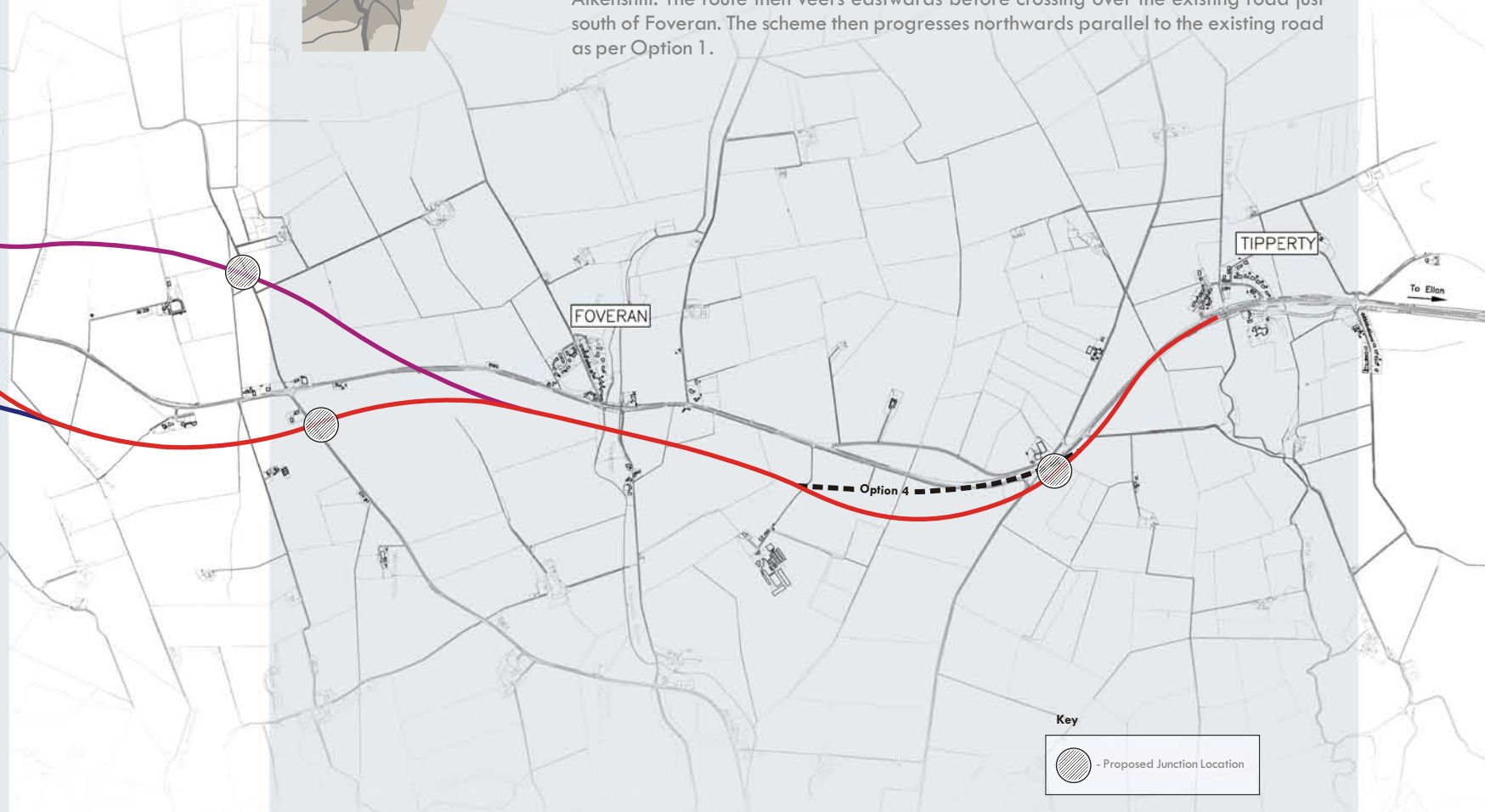
- To improve strategic and local **accessibility** on the A90 corridor between Balmedie and Tipperty for all types of road users.
- To improve the movement of traffic on the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty in order to aid **economic** prosperity and development in the north east of Scotland.
- To improve road **safety** on the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty.
- To minimise intrusion of the new works to people, natural **environment** and cultural heritage and to enhance the local environment where opportunities arise.
- To facilitate **integration** along the A90 corridor by providing opportunities for more reliable public transport.



Mainline Option 2 Commences as Option 1 at the north edge of Balmedie. The proposed scheme then curves eastwards where it crosses the existing road at Pettens. The scheme then progresses northwards parallel to the existing road as per Option 1.

Mainline Option 4 Merges with the existing corridor just south of the B9000 and follows online for the remainder of the route. Sub-option is not displayed since this sub-option represented only a minor shift in the alignment at the junction with the B9000.

Mainline Option 5 Commences as Option 1 at the north edge of Balmedie. The route then veers westwards passing on the east side of the hillock at Orrock House. The proposed scheme then curves westwards round the west side of Dambræ and Aikenshill. The route then veers eastwards before crossing over the existing road just south of Foveran. The scheme then progresses northwards parallel to the existing road as per Option 1.



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Progress to Date Carl Bro are currently reviewing previous work, including the route published in draft in 1996, in line with current design standards, environmental constraints and legislation, together with comments received following the publication of previous Draft Orders. Route options have been developed by Carl Bro and are shown in this leaflet. At this stage there is no preferred route. The Carl Bro team are also currently undertaking desktop and field studies which include:

- Landownership, noise, geotechnical, topographical and traffic surveys of the surrounding area.
- Studies into archaeology, cultural and natural heritage, landscape, geology, hydrology and receiving waters.
- Aerial photography necessary for mapping purposes.

You can keep up to date with the scheme progress on www.transportscotland.gov.uk

Your Views Are Important Transport Scotland wish to consider all viewpoints during the selection process of the scheme. Accordingly members of the public and all interested parties are invited to give their views on the options available. As part of this public consultation exercise, a public exhibition is being held at The White Horse Inn, Balmedie on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th June 2006.

The purpose of the exhibition is to present the route options and to seek your views on each option. Please consider carefully the route options shown on this leaflet and on the boards displayed at the exhibition and let your views be known. Your views are important and will form part of the assessment process. You can either complete the enclosed questionnaire or write to: **Alasdair Graham** Transport Scotland, Trunk Roads Infrastructure and Professional Services, Area 2D, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ. All comments should be received no later than 7th July 2006.

What Happens Next? Following a review of all the information gathered during this public consultation exercise, together with the information gathered during all ongoing studies, a preferred route will be chosen and new Draft Orders will be published. The publication of Draft Orders marks the start of the formal consultation process and it is at this time that the alignment will be fixed and the public will be able to formally comment on the proposals. It is anticipated that Draft Orders for the scheme will be published early in 2007. Progress after publishing the new Draft Orders will depend on the formal comments received to the proposals.



A90 BALMEDIE TO TIPPERRY

ROUTE OPTION PUBLIC EXHIBITION JUNE 2006

Questionnaire

Please complete the questionnaire and hand it in at the public exhibition or return to the address given on the brochure **before Friday 7th of July 2006.**

Name:

Address:

Telephone No:

1. Do you own, rent or occupy property which is within or adjacent to the routes being considered?

(Yes/No)

1a. Address of Property (if different from home address)



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1b. Description of Property (e.g farm, residential, non-residential, shop etc.)

Carl Bro 

please turn over...

A90 BALMEDIE TO TIPPERTY

ROUTE OPTION PUBLIC EXHIBITION JUNE 2006

Questionnaire continued...

2. Please indicate your most preferred route. If no preference, please stipulate.

Option 1
Preference:

Comment:

Option 2
Preference:

Comment:

Option 3
Preference:

Comment:

Option 5
Preference:

Comment:



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Carl Bro 

3. Are there any factors you think should be taken into account?

...Thank you for your co-operation

APPENDIX II

Exhibition Material and Photographs



Photograph No.1: Display Boards



Photograph No.2: Display Boards



Photograph No.3: Exhibition Attendance



Photograph No.4: Exhibition Attendance

APPENDIX III

Press Cutting

Motorists in a hurry to see the back of A90 blackspot

by Andy Philip

MOTORISTS have called on road chiefs to start work urgently on a new dual carriageway north of Aberdeen to improve safety.

The public was given a chance to comment on four detailed plans to upgrade the A90 between Balmacleid and Tipperary during an exhibition yesterday.

A steady stream of commuters and locals filed into the White Horse Inn at Balmacleid to view the plans and speak to representatives from Transport Scotland and Carl Bro, the consultancy behind the project.

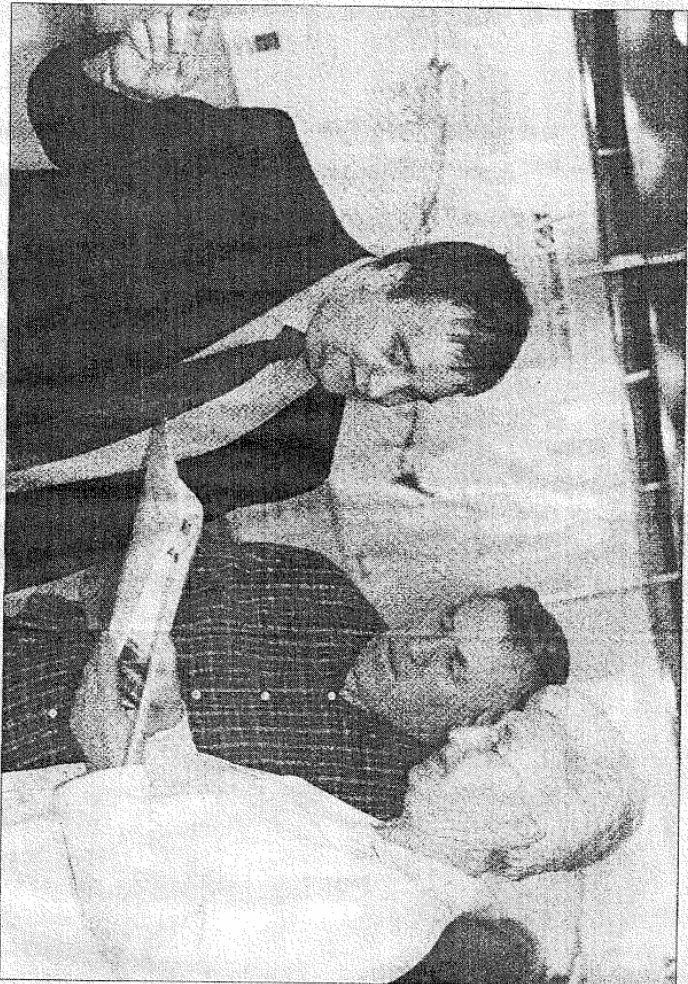
Five options were tabled originally but one has been withdrawn.

No homes will be demolished under the proposed alternative routes but many residents will find themselves within 100 yards of the new trunk road.

Despite these concerns, the majority of visitors to the exhibition welcomed the plans and said it was more important to upgrade the notorious bottleneck quickly and improve road safety.

The existing five-mile stretch of single carriageway has been the scene of several fatal accidents in the past year.

Stuart Henderson, of Clackmanning, Balmacleid, lives close to the route proposed in some of the options. "There's going to be a road," he said. "Wherever it goes, it will upset someone but it's necessary because of the accidents."



From left, Alasdair Graham, project manager of Transport Scotland shows Nicol and Pat Geddes round the Scottish Executive's public exhibition of route options for the A90 Balmacleid to Tipperary, held at the White Horse Inn, Balmacleid. PICTURE BY KEVIN ENSIE

He said he had written off his car in a crash on the road 10 years ago.

Gavin McGrath, a 38-year-old motorcyclist from Foveran, was also involved in a crash at a junction on the road.

"I don't really mind what option they pick," he said. "The upgrade is going to make the road a lot safer."

The proposals would remove all but three junctions along the five-mile stretch of road.

Balmacleid will be served by flyovers and slip roads at its existing south entrance. Houses will be accessed by the existing main road.

Ron Peterson, of Kirkhill Farm, near Newburgh, welcomed the road plans but said the project should have been completed 10 years ago.

"I think a lot of money has been wasted here," he said. One of the four options is almost identical to a route chosen in 1996.

Surveys of property and the environment were carried out and draft road orders published by the same consultancy in charge of the new project.

At 1996 prices, the road was expected to cost about £20million - almost half the projected total today.

One of the options would bring the Newburgh turnoff within yards of Mr Peterson's home.

He said: "Outside my house is a single track used by maybe two cars an hour. This option would bring 24,000 cars past the door. They should have stuck to option one and just got it built."

Officials at the exhibition, which is being held again from noon today, were forced to fend off allegations that one of the routes had been introduced as a sweetener for US property tycoon Donald Trump, who is planning a £300million golf complex nearby.

He hopes to build a luxury resort at Wicame Estate, at Balmacleid, to the east of the A90. The four original options all passed through estate land, while a fifth - revealed earlier this year - swerves inland, bypassing the proposed resort.

Both Transport Scotland and the Trump Organisation deny the claims.

The exhibition runs today from noon-5pm at the White Horse Inn.

Work on the £45million road is expected to begin in 2009 and could take two years to complete.

Friday 16 June 2006