

Update

September 2008



FORTH REPLACEMENT CROSSING

www.forthreplacementcrossing.info

The Forth Replacement Crossing is a major infrastructure project for Scotland. In December 2007 the Scottish Government confirmed its intention to build a multi-modal, cable-stayed bridge to the west of the existing Forth Road Bridge, which, despite significant investment and maintenance over its lifetime, is now showing signs of deterioration. The replacement bridge will maintain this vital link in the transport network, safeguarding the future of cross-Forth travel and the Scottish economy.

This is the second newsheet that has been produced to provide an update on recent developments.

Interim project director appointed

Mr John Howison OBE has been appointed interim project director for the Forth Replacement Crossing project.

John Howison has 40 years' professional experience and is a former Chief Road Engineer with the Scottish Government and latterly a Director of Transport Scotland until last year. He has since worked on a range of rail infrastructure and procurement projects. He will manage the project team until a permanent appointment is made which is expected in the new year.

Meeting The Public

The Forth Crossing team has been out and about over the last few months meeting a range of landowners, community groups and residents' groups both north and south of the estuary as well as local authorities and other key stakeholders, providing them with information on the current status of the project.

Ground and marine investigations on track

Ground and marine investigations in the Forth Estuary and surrounding area are on track. Drilling and boring works on site were completed during August and the samples taken are now being tested in the laboratory.

The results of these investigations, which provide vital information about the underlying ground conditions on the approaches to the bridge and the seabed, will inform decisions about the location and type of bridge foundations used in the crossing and the route of the connecting road network.

Ground investigation specialists Norwest Holst and Ritchies began work on the northern and southern approaches in March and completed work in August. Their work has extended from the M90 at Halbeath in the north to the M9 in the south.

In the Firth of Forth itself, a team of up to 25 specialists from Glover Site Investigations began marine investigations at the end of May and the works on site were also completed during August. Working from two jack-up rigs, the teams have extracted rock samples from various locations on the seabed, including the proposed sites of the southern and northern bridge towers and approach piers and from Beamer Rock - the proposed site of the central tower.



• Marine investigations in Firth of Forth

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Surveys

Environmental Surveys

A wide range of environmental surveys have been carried out since February this year and these will continue well into 2009 to ensure adequate coverage of all seasons. Environmental surveys are necessary to give a full picture of the features of a landscape and the wildlife, flora and fauna that inhabit it. The information is used to assess the potential impacts of the scheme on the environment, including communities, and allow mitigation measures to be put in place which will reduce these impacts. The surveys are carried out in order to gather information for the Environmental Impact Assessment the results of which will be published in an Environmental Statement.

The results are used to inform the consideration of route options and will subsequently be used during the development of the design for the bridge and new roads. The Forth Replacement Crossing environmental team has undertaken consultation with organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland, reviewed existing environmental information and undertaken environmental surveys in the area.

Summer is a particularly busy period for ecologists as it is the optimum time for undertaking many different types of surveys. Over the past few months, surveys of vegetation, badgers, red squirrels, amphibians, breeding birds, freshwater fish and invertebrates have been completed by a team of approximately 60 Jacobs Arupecologists. At present, estuarine bird surveys, bat surveys and reptile surveys are being undertaken. Water vole and otter surveys have almost been completed but there are a few areas where dense vegetation has prevented the surveyors accessing the riverbank and the surveys in these areas will be completed in early autumn once the vegetation starts to die back. In September, fish surveys will be undertaken in the Firth of Forth and the results of these surveys will build on the results of similar surveys carried out in April.



• Bird surveys in Firth of Forth

If you are interested in finding out more about the surveys which are being conducted please read our information leaflet entitled "Environmental Surveys and Ground Investigations" which is available on the project website or by contacting the FRC team.

Traffic Surveys

Extensive traffic survey work has been carried out over a wide area surrounding the Forth estuary and connecting roads in the past months to assist with the design of the roads and junctions. These surveys have taken a variety of formats such as sample journey time surveys, queue lengths at junctions as well as online travel surveys.

Topographical Surveys

Over the past few months topographical surveys of the land around the northern and southern shores of the Forth have been undertaken and are now almost complete. Data from aerial photography and detailed surveying on the ground will be combined to prepare high precision maps and 3D computer models of the terrain at a variety of scales. These will allow the team to design the bridge and its approach road networks in order to minimise their impact.



• Topographical surveys on the North shore

Contact Information

For more information about the Forth Replacement Crossing please contact the Transport Scotland team on:

Phone: **0141 272 7578**

Email: frcenquiries@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.forthreplacementcrossing.info

You can also sign up to our regular e-newsletter on the website to receive updates on the project by email.