



The Scottish Government

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

A96 FOCHABERS AND MOSSTODLOCH BYPASS PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE

1. This letter confirms the options being taken forward for:
- (i) the mitigation strategy for the bypass between the Gordon Castle main estate driveway and the realigned Gordon Castle Farm road ("the mitigation strategy"), including the reconstructed wall adjacent to Castle Street; and
 - (ii) the access road to Gordon Castle Farm ("the farm access").

Background

2. The Scottish Ministers issued their decision to proceed with the northern bypass route on 17 March 2005. Their decision included the following two requirements:
- (i) at paragraph 8(vi):
"that the mitigation strategy for the bypass between the realigned farm road and the main estate drive be re-examined and drawn up in consultation with residents of Castle Street and Duncan Avenue, the proprietors of other affected property, and the relevant statutory bodies. This mitigation strategy should ensure the optimum balance between noise reduction, prevention of pedestrian access to the bypass and integration with the designed landscape."
 - (ii) at paragraph 8(vii):
"that the provision of a new access to Gordon Castle Farm from the existing small roundabout by Christie's garden centre at the existing junction of the A96 trunk road and the A98 road, or an alternative route off the A98 road, be examined in more detail, including horizontal alignment, vertical alignment, affect on the water supply to the lake, environmental impacts and impacts on the Designed Landscape and the estate boundary wall."
3. Transport Scotland produced options for the mitigation strategy and the farm access, and then consulted with the following statutory consultees, Moray Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, culminating at a workshop on 17 October, 2007.
4. Transport Scotland then prepared two Options Assessment Reports setting out the options for public consultation, held a public exhibition at Fochabers on 13-15 December, 2007, and invited local residents to comment on the proposals and express their preferred options.
5. The consultation exercises are now complete.

The mitigation strategy - consultation results

6. The Options Assessment Report for the mitigation strategy outlined 12 options, lettered A-L. As reported at section 7 of the Report, option L is the preferred option of the statutory consultees.
7. Transport Scotland received 155 responses from the public consultation. The option preferences are as follows:

Option	Number of preferences expressed
A	7
B	1
C	1
D	2
E	15
F	16
G	9
H	3
I	3
J	4
L	75
Other	1
No preference	18

8. Section 6.3 of the Options Assessment Report for the mitigation strategy details proposals for the reconstructed wall adjacent to Castle Street, including the intention to consult with the residents of Castle Street who will be directly affected. 19 letters were issued to those residents and 13 responses were received. 8 responses were in favour of retaining the wall at its existing height, and 5 responses were in favour of the demolition of the existing wall and the construction of a new wall along the same position/alignment with the height increased to approximately 2 metres.

The farm access - consultation results

9. The Options Assessment Report for the farm access outlined 3 options, numbered 1-3. As reported at section 3 of the Report, the statutory consultees considered that although there are only small differences between the options, option 1 has the least impact when considered against the appraisal criteria.
10. Transport Scotland received 155 responses from the public consultation. The option preferences are as follows:

Option	Number of preferences expressed
1	60
2	15
3	58
Other	6
No preference	16

The options being taken forward

11. Transport Scotland has completed the further examinations of the mitigation strategy and the farm access required by the Scottish Ministers, taking into consideration the views of the statutory consultees and the local residents in Fochabers. Transport Scotland has determined the options it will take forward as follows:
- (i) for the mitigation strategy, **option L**, being the creation of a false crest with a 1.9m to 3m noise barrier at the back of the road verge, and with the reconstructed wall adjacent to Castle Street being retained at its existing height; and
 - (ii) for the farm access, **option 1**, in terms of which the new access road will be moved approximately 30 metres to the north of its existing alignment.

The next steps

12. With the re-examination of these important issues completed, the detailed design of the scheme will now be finalised. Construction is programmed to start in late 2008/early 2009, with the bypass opening to traffic in summer 2010.

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