

ISA speech Saturday 13 October 2007

Good afternoon. My name is Henry Irvine-Fortescue and I am one of the vice-chairmen of Road Sense.

I am going to speak about the official orders that have recently been issued, and the objection process. The road orders issued are:-

1. Compulsory Purchase Orders published on 25 September 2007
2. Draft side road orders, published 11 September 2007
3. AWPR draft road orders, originally published on 14 December 2006, now re-issued on 11 September 2007
4. Re-issued Environmental Statement. (The previous Environmental Statement has been withdrawn.)
5. De-trunking orders

1. Compulsory Purchase Orders

The Scottish Ministers must serve notice on certain parties specified by statute. The CPO's have been served on the landowners and tenants of the land needed for the AWPR. You may have seen notices posted by roadsides. Most of these individuals will have engaged a solicitor or land agent to act on their behalf, and those who object to their land being forcefully taken in this way will be lodging their own personal objections.

For the avoidance of doubt, people who have not been served with a CPO cannot object to it unless of course their land is affected but they have not been identified. The landowners and tenants of land to be taken, if the road is ever built, are the statutory objectors.

2. Draft side road orders

The Side Road Orders deal with roads which are effectively cut by the proposed AWPR. They are sometimes known as "stop up orders" as any road crossing the line of the AWPR is, effectively, closed off in perpetuity.

The general public have a right of passage on a highway, which is why access roads, over bridges or underpasses have been included as part of the design process.

The main objection against a Side Road Order would be where the AWPR stops people getting to where they have always been able to go. This is, however, very tightly drawn legislation. People may be greatly inconvenienced by a new access road, but this may not be sufficient reason for a valid objection to a Side Road Order. A valid objection would only be upheld where people are stopped from getting to where they have always had access, and you yourselves have the local knowledge to be aware of the problems. You will note that there are few over-bridges or underpasses – a major cost saving.

Please take the opportunity after the meeting to study the maps of your local area so that you can make your own objections. We are here to give assistance if needed.

3. AWPR draft road orders, and Re-issued Environmental Statement

This is your last opportunity to object to the road. If you do not object, you will not have an opportunity to be represented at the public local inquiry.

We have already got over 7,500 objections and we wish to see the total top 10,000.

Transport Scotland has failed to tell us what changes have been made to the new Environmental Statement. It is therefore impossible to know what these changes are, unless we do a “spot the difference” exercise through 14 volumes. However, as far as we are aware, the main changes are:-

Roads changes:-

1. Refinement A96 Junction – no longer Grade Separated but roundabout.
2. South Kirkhill industrial estate junction removed
3. A90 Blackdog junction changed
4. River Dee bridge crossing – viaduct, not bow arch

Environmental Issues now included:-

1. Mitigation measures for Southern leg and Fastlink published,
2. Sustainability issues added,
3. Noise data added
4. SNH landscape assessment.
5. Wintering birds data and other environmental details.

A template letter has been prepared which covers the above additional grounds for objection, which is on our website.

5. De-trunking orders

If the AWPR is ever built, responsibility for the A90 north of Stonehaven to Aberdeen, and South from Blackdog to the city, as well as Anderson Drive will rest fully with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. The Scottish Government will be responsible for the maintenance and repair to the AWPR and Fastlink.

As a result, a further cost will fall on local council tax payers, which has yet to be quantified. One figure suggested is £2m per year, with an extra £3m per year for the cost to the councils if the road is built under the Public Private Partnership. The way the City budget is going, I would expect many more pot-holes over time!

Conclusion

To close, the final decision on whether or not the road will go ahead, and whether it will go ahead on the proposed route has not yet been taken. There are now further opportunities for objections to be made both on the decision to proceed on the proposed route and on the method by which the decision was reached.

We must now take these opportunities. Please submit your objections and encourage others to do so. Remember that the objections must be received by Alison Hughes at Transport Scotland by 26 October, and if in doubt, use the email address **awprojections@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk**