

# Road Sense Bulletin



Summer 07

[www.road-sense.org](http://www.road-sense.org)

## Bypass Delay Announced by Scottish Executive

Confusion has resulted from the Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson's announcement of a one year delay to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

First, there was an announcement of a review of the costs, as part of a review by the SNP of all transport projects inherited from the previous Labour/Lib Dem Executive. We hear from Holyrood sources that Audit Scotland has concerns over the budget for the road. Whether these concerns will emerge publicly is not yet clear. Road Sense will continue to seek information from the Minister, MSPs and local Councils on the real costs of the AWPR.

Second, it was announced that there will be "a new programme for the scheme" which would now see the opening of the road delayed until the end of 2012 — a one year delay to the original plan. Road Sense has always stressed that the route was brought forward in a rush, without adequate planning. That is now confirmed. We will be focusing on flaws in the procedure for choosing the route at the Public Inquiry.

Third, the draft roads orders that went out in December 2006 together with the accompanying Environmental Statement are having to be re-published 'to comply with new

European legislation'.

There seems to have been a major breach of practice by Transport Scotland. The orders were published prematurely, without adequate arrangements for consultation. Our original objections will stand — but we will also be able to submit new ones.

The actual nature of the mistake by Transport Scotland is difficult to pin down. We have it on good authority that the reason given publicly is not the real one! Once again the former Transport Minister Tavish Scott is cast in a bad light. Civil servants seem to have been told to get on with the new route regardless of protocols.

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Road Sense



Stewart Stevenson

Minister for Transport,  
Infrastructure &  
Climate Change

Crown Copyright

## News in brief

### Road Sense Committee

The Road Sense Committee is made up of representatives from the affected areas. It meets once a month. We are always looking for new people to join the committee.

If you are interested please contact:

Tony Hawkins

[a.hawkins@btconnect.com](mailto:a.hawkins@btconnect.com)

### Dates of Future Meetings

**Milltimber/Peterculter Action Group**  
Committee Meeting, 16th August 2007  
East Lodge, Culter House Road

## Road Sense Activity

### Preparations for the Public Inquiry

Plans for a Public Inquiry into the AWPR will be announced later this year. Road Sense is already formulating a strategy with the help of a leading Edinburgh QC. We have been advised that we have a strong case but we will need your financial assistance to put that case forward. Public Meetings will be held in the Autumn to explain the Public Inquiry process and to appeal for funds.

Fears that a successful outcome to the Public Inquiry—rejection of the AWPR—might be over-ruled by Ministers have been allayed by a statement from Alex Salmond that he will abide by the results of an Inquiry. However, we have also been told that Stewart Stevenson, the new Minister, on the advice of Transport Scotland, is seeking to restrict the scope of the Inquiry.

**We have always known that Transport Scotland does not wish to have the underlying arguments for a by-pass looked at too closely, as they will not stand up to close scrutiny. Pressure is being placed on the Minister to restrict the Inquiry to purely technical issues over the route, rather than the question of whether a by-pass is actually needed. Please write to the Minister to express your concern. His address is Stewart Stevenson MSP, Scottish Parliament, EDINBURGH EH99 1SP**

### TREES VERSUS TRAFFIC— SUPPORT FROM THE WOODLAND TRUST

If the proposed route of the AWPR goes ahead large areas of ancient woodland will be lost – destroying the homes of Scotland’s rarest wildlife. The Woodland Trust Scotland is concerned about the current proposals. If it goes ahead, the new road will affect 24 woods, 12 of them listed on the SNH inventory of ancient woodland. The extent of the damage varies from minor loss to serious fragmentation/loss of habitat. The Scottish Executive is committed to the protection of ancient woodland within National Planning Policy Guidance. However, it seems that ancient woodlands are at the bottom of the list when it comes to protection from development proposals.

Ancient woodland of semi - natural origin dates back to the ice age. It is incredibly rare, covering just over 1% of Scotland’s land area. It is home to more threatened species than any other UK habitat. Ancient woodland is, by definition, an irreplaceable natural resource and takes centuries, even millennia to evolve. Ancient trees resonate with the history of the landscape and are markers in the lives of individuals and communities. They harbour a unique array of wildlife. Destruction would cause irreversible damage to fragile ecosystems. In addition to the environmental qualities, woodland provides sanctuary from the stresses of modern day living as well as the visual enhancement of our landscapes.

Unfortunately threats to ancient woodland habitats are all too common across the entire UK & Scotland we are aware of over 100 woods under threat. This is a big concern for the Trust as these habitats cannot be recreated.

The Trust recognises a solution is required to help Aberdeen’s growing transport problem. However it is the duty of public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Trust stands for no more loss of ancient woodland and we call on the new Executive to protect our natural heritage and consider the alternatives. More information at

[www.woodsunderthreat.info](http://www.woodsunderthreat.info)

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**Summer BBQ**  
**Friday 31st August 2007**

Kippie Lodge on the front lawn  
Start anytime from 5.30pm.  
We have contingency plans for wet weather

**NEOS**  
**North East Open Studios Week**  
15th -24th September

Hazel Irvine-Fortescue will open her artist’s workshop on the Kingcausie Estate to the public. A number of other artists, ceramicists and sculptors will be exhibiting

## Latest News

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### Political Lobbying & Public Relations

We are now approaching a critical phase of our campaign. Road Sense is employing a political lobbyist based in Edinburgh to present our case to politicians.

We are also planning a strong media campaign in the months leading up to the public inquiry. An Aberdeen media relations firm will be assisting us.

Our PR and Campaign Group is looking for volunteers. If you can help, please contact :-

sheonawarnock@hotmail.com



### Further Road Orders

The AWPR team has admitted that the previously issued road orders will have to be re-advertised this summer, as errors were made when they were first issued. The orders and accompanying environmental statement from December 2006 will be superseded completely. Further orders relating to the road will also be issued. There are three kinds of order :-

1. Draft compulsory purchase orders (CPOs);
2. Draft side road orders (SROs);
3. Draft mainline road orders (MROs).

The CPO identifies the land affected by the route. Both Owners and Tenants will be served with the notice. There will also be an advert in the local press for two successive weeks which will specify a deadline for objections, specify how objections may be made, and say where the CPO and map may be inspected.

The SRO identifies any local roads which will be "stopped up" either during the building of the AWPR or for ever. Individuals can object to these orders if they are affected. Again, an objections period will be advertised.

The MROs will be the final versions of the draft road orders issued in December 2006. It is not expected that there will be any major changes to the line of the road identified then.

Objectors can lodge their objections to the orders within the defined period of notice, which cannot be less than 21 days from issue of the orders. It is expected that explanatory literature will be issued with the orders.

Ministers will consider objections and a Public Inquiry will follow if the objections cannot be resolved. It is expected that the PLI will be split into two parts, the first dealing with the road as a whole, with matters such as policy and the environmental impact being assessed and the second part will deal with the CPOs.

## Call for Donations

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Fighting a state-backed infrastructure proposal on the scale of the AWPR is an enormous and expensive task. Last year we raised enough money to fund the start of our campaign, including the commissioning of legal advice, engineering reports, PR assistance and facilitating the 8,000 formal objections submitted in February to Transport Scotland.

We now need to raise sufficient funds to prepare for the anticipated Public Inquiry. We will need to instruct a highly experienced senior advocate together with a number of specialist consultants to prepare evidence on topics on which we have limited or no expertise, such as noise pollution and traffic modelling. These services will be expensive but essential if we are to put up an effective and ultimately successful fight against the AWPR.

We therefore ask you to donate a further £350 or any amount you would find affordable to the campaign fund.

**Please help us to fight the AWPR. Please make a donation to Road-Sense**

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#### DONATIONS SLIP

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

TEL NO:.....

DONATION AMOUNT:.....

Please send cheques payable to Road Sense to : Stuart Palmer, 3 Hill Farm, Contlaw Road, Milltimber, AB13 0ET

## Political Update

Before the election, Road Sense met Alex Salmond to discuss his views and those of the SNP on the AWPR. Alex Salmond promised that he would:

- Publish the minutes of any meetings at which the former Transport Minister discussed or decided on the proposed route.
- Look at the feasibility of starting the northern stretch of the route while the debate is ongoing about the southern stretch.
- Abide by the findings of the Public Inquiry
- Not fund the AWPR through the Public Finance Initiative.

Since the election Alex Salmond has repeated these promises.

Alex Salmond is now the First Minister. Road Sense has written to the new SNP MSPs explaining our views on the AWPR. A meeting has been held with Cllr. Kevin Stewart SNP, Chair of Nestrans, with agreement reached on many points. At a meeting with Maureen Watt, SNP MSP, whilst she stated she was in favour of the road, she did not feel the Milltimber Brae solution was the correct one. A meeting with the new Transport Minister is being sought, but has yet to be confirmed.

The North East has the largest share of SNP Ministers and Councillors in favour of the AWPR. However, many do not feel the current proposal is the right one.

In Aberdeen City, which is now a Lib-Dem / SNP coalition, Councillors have expressed reservations about the ability of the road to reduce congestion; and they are fearful of the high cost to the Council. Having had to follow the party line in the past, the AWPR is now causing a few Councillors in all the parties to question where their priorities lie. The AWPR will have a devastating effect on community tax, education, housing, health and public safety.

Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council recently voted against the AWPR. It has joined the five other Community Councils opposed to the AWPR.

We are planning more meetings with those that matter to get the message across to them. The AWPR will not reduce congestion, and its costs will cripple the city and the shire. In the meantime we would encourage everyone to submit representations to their Councillors and MSPs to ensure our voice is heard.

### Update from the Chair

In our last bulletin I made a plea on behalf of Road Sense for your continued support - and how you responded! During 5 hectic weeks Road Sense members managed to collect over 8,000 Objections to the road orders. If the Scottish Executive ever believed that there was no more than minor opposition to this scheme then it's unlikely that they think that now. The AWPR is the most unpopular road scheme in Scottish history. We hope that this level of opposition will now ensure that there will be a full public inquiry into the proposal at which all of its obvious shortcomings will be fully exposed.

We will continue to lobby to have the scheme abandoned but our main focus is now on preparing for the anticipated Public Inquiry. To that effect we have engaged senior counsel in Edinburgh and, in close collaboration with some of our allies, we have started to gather together the material and witnesses for the Inquiry. Some members of Road-Sense will be giving evidence this coming November at an Inquiry into a major housing development at Blairs - just the type of green belt incursion that the AWPR would encourage.

I remain totally convinced that we will win the battle against the AWPR. The costs of new roads, financially and environmentally, become more and more evident. At some point common sense will prevail and this hugely damaging proposal will be abandoned.

**William Walton**, Chairman.

**More information about volunteering to help in a particular subgroup can be found on the website [www.road-sense.org](http://www.road-sense.org)**