

## PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee – 7 November 2012

## NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK – CALL FOR PROJECTS

## Report by Executive Director (Environment)

**ABSTRACT**

This report recommends that Perth & Kinross Council submit a bid to include the Cross Tay Link Road and the A9/A85 junction within NPF 3 as part of an A9 National Project, thereby recognising these projects significance at a national level.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1.1 The Committee is asked to:-

- i) Remit to the Executive Director (Environment) to prepare and submit a bid to the Scottish Government to include the strategic Perth Transport Proposals within NPF 3 as a national project either individually or in combination with the wider A9 proposals.
- ii) Request that the Board of TACTRAN endorse the Council's submission to NPF 3.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Scottish Government's strategy for the long-term development of Scotland's towns, cities and countryside. The NPF is about shaping Scotland's future and is concerned with how Scotland develops over the next 20 years and how to make that possible. The NPF identifies key strategic infrastructure needs to ensure that each part of the country can develop to its full potential.
- 2.2 National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) was published in 2009. It sets the spatial strategy for Scotland's development to 2030, and designates 14 national developments of strategic importance to Scotland.
- 2.3 The Scottish Government is now embarking on the preparation of the third National Planning Framework. This will identify a number of new national developments, establishing the need for them in the national interest. The Scottish Government is therefore requesting the submission of proposals for national developments by 14 December 2012.
- 2.4 National developments are those which are defined as making a significant contribution to Scotland's sustainable economic growth. They need to be of more than regional significance and contribute towards one or more of the following:
  - An 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.
  - Achieving the aims of the Zero Waste Plan.

- The Scottish Government's Renewable Energy Targets.
  - Skills development, reducing unemployment and job creation.
  - Strengthening Scotland's links with the rest of the world.
  - Improving our digital, transport, utilities or green infrastructure networks.
  - Adapting to, or mitigating, the effects of climate change.
  - Improving the quality of the built or natural environment.
- 2.5 There are currently 14 major developments identified in NPF2, including the Replacement Forth Crossing, West of Scotland Strategic Rail Enhancements, Electricity Grid Reinforcements and the Commonwealth Games Facilities. As can be seen, they are all clearly large scale and of strategic significance. The recognition of a proposal as a National Project in NPF3 brings with it an enhanced commitment, at a Scottish Government level, to its delivery. Whilst generally that commitment includes a financial element it does not guarantee full funding from the Scottish Government. Indeed many of the projects in NPF2 are being delivered through partnerships including both the public and private sector.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Whilst many of the projects under discussion within Perth & Kinross may contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the Scottish economy, it is only in the field of transport infrastructure that the criteria for a national development can be met.
- 3.2 Members will be aware of the Council's own aspiration for improved transport infrastructure as presented in a report to the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee of 26 August 2009 (Article No. 441/09) and followed up through the Local Development Plan. Within the overall package of measures there are a number of key projects of inter-regional or national significance including:
- Cross Tay Link Road (CTLR)
  - A9/A85 Junction Improvements
- 3.3 All of these projects are either on or link to the strategic road network and whilst they provide the essential capacity to allow for the delivery of the Local Development Plan they also relieve congestion on the national trunk road network. Most critically however these proposals relieve pressure on Transport Scotland to grade separate the Inveralmond and Broxden junctions and negate the potentially significant land use impacts particularly at Inveralmond.
- 3.4 As members will be aware bridge closures (Friarton or Tay Road Bridge) due to adverse weather or accidents cause major congestion as strategic national traffic is forced through central Perth. Such occurrences have become more frequent in recent years and in effect paralyse the strategic network. This affects accessibility to North and North East Scotland including 3 of Scotland's cities. Such disruption in the network can have major economic

consequences for businesses. It is therefore suggested that the key projects identified above, including an additional Tay crossing, would have significant benefits to the wider national network.

- 3.5 The Perth proposals need to be seen in the context of the Scottish Government's own proposals for the A9. This includes both the commitment to the dualling of the A9 from Perth to Inverness and the recently commissioned Keir Roundabout (Dunblane) to Luncarty corridor study. With the cost of the A9 dualling likely to exceed £2 billion, this project is a candidate for National Development status. Whilst this project seeks to improve safety on the A9 it aims to improve the connectivity of Scotland's most northerly city. Improved journey times between Perth and Inverness should not be compromised by increased congestion and delays around Perth. It would therefore be a missed opportunity for the Scottish Government not to incorporate the Perth proposals and the findings of the Keir to Luncarty study into an overall A9 National Project.
- 3.6 It is understood that a report, recommending that the A9 be identified as a National Project, will be submitted to the appropriate Committee of Highland Council on 14 November 2012. Following discussions with officers from Highland Council it was agreed that the best way forward, in the limited time available, was the submission of separate bids. Both Councils have agreed to share information and it is hoped that the complementary bids will add weight to the case.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Head of Legal Services, the Head of Finance and the Director of TACTRAN have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The preparation of the bid to have the CTLR incorporated into NPF 3 as a national project will require additional traffic modelling at a cost of up to £40,000. This will be funded from the Environment Service revenue budget.

#### **6. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012**

- 6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. The proposals contained in this report support the following Council objectives:

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy

#### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)**

- 7.1 An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal

requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

- 7.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

## **8. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Although the CTLR has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment by the Council no further work is required at this stage. The Scottish Government will however require to submit NPF 3 to the Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 This report recommends that Perth & Kinross Council submit a bid to include the Cross Tay Link Road and the A9/A85 junction improvements within NPF 3 as part of an A9 National Project, thereby recognising this project's significance at a national level. The final submission will require further technical work and the report seeks to instruct the Executive Director (Environment) to prepare and submit this bid by the 14 December 2012 deadline.

**JIM VALENTINE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENT)**

**Note:** The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report:

- (i) National Planning Framework
- (ii) Scottish Government 2009
- (iii) Call for Candidate National Developments, Scottish Government 2012

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