

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

27 June 2012

GLENEAGLES RAILWAY STATION - PROPOSED NEW ACCESS ROAD

Report by Depute Chief Executive

This report seeks authority to acquire land either by negotiation or by Compulsory Purchase to facilitate the construction of a new access road that will link Gleneagles Station to the A823/A9 roundabout.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Council is asked to:

- i) Agree to the purchase of land required for the project referred to in this Report by negotiation with affected owners.
- ii) Instruct the Head of Legal Services to initiate the statutory procedures to acquire the land by Compulsory Purchase in parallel with the negotiated process.
- iii) Authorise the promotion of the Gleneagles Station Link Road Compulsory Purchase Order 2012 to acquire the land shown on the Plan PK/SK/219 annexed to this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At present the only vehicular access to Gleneagles Station is directly off the A9 trunk road. This section of the A9 is dual carriageway where traffic volumes and vehicle speeds are high. The junction is "at-grade" which is defined as an intersection where two or more roads meet at the same level. There are no deceleration or acceleration lanes for drivers entering and exiting the junction. Because of this, buses and other local traffic are reluctant to use it on the grounds of road safety. This inhibits the use of the rail network by residents, visitors and businesses in the Strathallan district and by those in the wider Crieff and Strathearn district. In addition local pedestrians and cyclists cannot reach the station without crossing the A9.
- 2.2 Many of the accidents on the A9 between Dunblane and Perth have occurred at the at-grade junctions on the road. These accidents are often serious or fatal. Police accident records show that one fatal accident and one slight-injury road traffic accident have occurred in the vicinity of the at-grade access to the railway station in the five year period 2007-2011. In addition, numerous damage-only accidents have occurred on this section of the A9 at various junctions/accesses.

- 2.3 A reduction in the number of at-grade junctions will assist in reducing the frequency and the severity of accidents on this route. The removal of the Gleneagles junction will contribute to this objective.
- 2.4 The closure of accesses such as the Gleneagles junction can often require the creation of a new grade-separated junction at significant cost. However, a cost-effective solution can be provided here owing to the proximity of the grade-separated Loaninghead Junction.
- 2.5 Other projects, such as improvements to the A90 Perth–Dundee Road, have demonstrated that casualty figures can be dramatically reduced by restricting the number of accesses and crossing points on the A90. The proposals set out in this report include the closure of two of these accesses.
- 2.6 Funding for the construction of a new link road to Gleneagles Station was agreed by the Council on 9 February 2012 as part of the Composite Capital Budget 2012/13 to 2016/17. Since then, feasibility and design work has been carried out to determine the optimal road alignment and the extent of the land required for the project has been identified.
- 2.7 The proposal is consistent with both National Transport Policy and Local Plan and Regional Strategy.

3. POLICY

National Policy Framework

- 3.1 The Scottish Government has 5 strategic objectives to make Scotland a more successful country, these are:
 - Safer and Stronger
 - Greener
 - Healthier
 - Wealthier and Fairer
 - Smarter
- 3.2 The proposals in this report are consistent with the first 4 of these objectives through:
 - improvements to road safety and a reduction in casualties
 - better access to rail services for local commuters to Scotland's cities
 - safer routes to encourage pedestrian and cycle access to the station
 - better and safer public transport access to the area for tourists and visitors to boost the local economy
- 3.3 The National Transport Strategy published by the Scottish Government in 2006 sets out a number of strategic policy objectives which are assisted by the proposals in this report:

- to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport
 - to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement
 - to give people a choice of public transport, and a realistic alternative to the car.
- 3.4 In 2008 the Government published the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) with its investment priorities based on maintaining and safely operating existing road and rail assets, making better use of the existing capacity of the road and rail network and targeting improvements which will add to the network and increase capacity in order to meet future needs.
- 3.5 From the STPR 29 major work packages were identified with 2 of these relevant to the proposed works at Gleneagles Station:
- Project 1 (Strategic Road Safety Plan) aims to reduce accident rates and achieve national targets for casualty reductions and undertake proposed road safety measures.
 - Project 16 (A9 Upgrading from Dunblane to Inverness) aims to reduce the number and severity of accidents, and also driver frustration between Inverness and Central Scotland by reducing journey times. It also aims to improve the operational effectiveness of the A9.

Local Plan and Regional Transport Strategy

- 3.6 The proposal to support and promote infrastructure improvements at Gleneagles Station as part of the Tay Estuary Rail Study (TERS) is contained within Tactran's Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan (2008-2023).
- 3.7 In addition to local rail service improvements along the Arbroath-Dundee-Perth-Glasgow corridor, the TERS Report (2009) looked at possible enhancements to existing stations along the corridor and recommended improvements to Gleneagles Station in preference to other options considered at Blackford and Greenloaning. The Report also recommended the construction of a new link road from the station to the A823 and increasing the size of the car park.
- 3.8 The Council recently published its Proposed Local Development Plan (2012), which will eventually replace the adopted Local Plans for each area. It identifies the need to provide a new access road to Gleneagles Station, and to improve accessibility within the station itself.
- 3.9 The improvements within the station are currently being progressed by Tactran and the rail companies in advance of the 2014 Ryder Cup. These include improvements to the waiting facilities, information and security systems and measures for DDA compliance.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 It is proposed to construct an entirely new link road approximately 820m in length from the A823/A9 roundabout directly into Gleneagles Station. The link road will form a new arm off the roundabout and will require the existing A9 slip road to be realigned. It is also proposed to form a turning circle at the station entrance and increase the width of the new road at the railway station to accommodate additional on-street parking. The link road will enable two substandard at-grade junctions on the A9 and a central reserve opening to be closed. This will result in a number of benefits. These include:

- improvements to road safety and a reduction in casualties
- better access to rail services for commuters to Scotland's cities
- safer routes to encourage pedestrian and cycle access to the station
- better and safer public transport access to the area for tourists and visitors

4.2 Although the proposals will provide these benefits to the wider community, affected landowners will also benefit from the improvements - particularly in relation to road safety.

4.3 A number of possible alignments for the link road were considered as follows and are shown on Plan PK/SK/218 annexed to this report :

Option 1 An alignment with a junction directly onto the A823 approximately 70m south of the roundabout. This would have a significant negative environmental impact due to the need to cut through a large embankment and woodland area. This junction would also present road safety concerns due to its close proximity to the roundabout to the north and the railway bridge and bend to the south. It would be difficult to engineer and would be more costly.

Options 2a and 2b Alignments with a junction directly onto the A9 slip road - these alignments were rejected by Transport Scotland as they did not meet their minimum design standards.

Option 3 This was suggested by one of the affected landowners. An alignment parallel to the existing A9 was investigated but would not comply with current design standards. The route would also be longer and construction costs would increase by around 50% as a result of the length of the route and ground conditions that are likely to be problematic.

Option 4 An alignment from a new arm off the roundabout. This option minimises the severance of land and is supported by Transport Scotland. A high containment barrier or an earthworks bund will provide sufficient separation from the railway boundary.

- 4.4 Option 4 is the preferred option as it is the safest, minimises the severance of privately owned land and is the lowest cost option that is acceptable to Transport Scotland.

5. LAND OWNERSHIP

- 5.1 The extent of land required for Option 4 has been identified and is shown on Plan PK/SK/219 annexed to this report.
- 5.2 Discussions with a view to purchasing the land by agreement have commenced with the landowners but current indications are that a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) may be necessary. It is therefore proposed to promote the CPO in parallel with the negotiations. Recent Scottish Government Guidance endorses this approach. However, discussions will continue throughout the process to ensure that every effort is made to purchase the land by agreement
- 5.3 It is considered that it would be reasonable and proportionate to acquire the land by compulsory purchase in the event that negotiations for voluntary sale cannot be concluded with all the landowners within a reasonable timescale. The land which is required is owned by a number of different parties, which reduces the chances of reaching voluntary agreements for the whole site
- 5.4 There are compelling arguments for providing a new road link to the station and it is therefore considered that the public interest outweighs that of the individual landowners involved. It is acknowledged that these landowners will be deprived of their land but the preferred option is favoured because, among other reasons, it reduces the landtake as far as is possible. The landowners will receive appropriate compensation and, in addition, they will benefit from a safer access to their properties.
- 5.5 The Ryder Cup is due to take place at Gleneagles in 2014. This major event will bring an additional volume of traffic of all kinds to the area, and it would be advantageous to have the road improvements in place before it takes place. Key to meeting this objective will be the completion of the land acquisition for the project by the end of 2013.
- 5.6 Regardless of the timing of the Ryder Cup event, if land acquisition cannot be concluded on a voluntary basis a Compulsory Purchase Order will be required. In order to ensure that the proposals are implemented in advance of the Ryder Cup event it is recommended that the CPO process is commenced as soon as possible.
- 5.7 The District Valuer has been instructed by the Council to act as Agent in the negotiation of the land purchase and Brodies Solicitors have been instructed to handle the legal work associated with the project.
- 5.8 The CPO will be promoted under Sections 103 and 104 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and The Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure)

(Scotland) Act 1947. Once the CPO is made and submitted to the Scottish Ministers for Confirmation, the Ministers will, in most cases, issue their decision within 4 months (if an inquiry is not necessary) or 13 months (if an inquiry is necessary). It should be noted that, if objections are received from any of the affected landowners and are not withdrawn, the Scottish Ministers will arrange an inquiry.

Stopping-Up Orders

- 5.9 The new link road, the turning circle and the roadway through the station premises northwards to the entrance to Caledonia Cottage will be adopted as a public road and maintained by the Council as Roads Authority.
- 5.10 The proposed new link road will provide a new access to the railway station, Millhill Farm and the two residential properties located in the vicinity of the station. As a result it is proposed to stop-up the existing station access under Section 68 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, as it will become unnecessary when the alternative has been provided. The existing Millhill Farm access from the A9 will be stopped-up by Transport Scotland.
- 5.11 At present the owners of the two cottages located off the existing access road (Caledonian Cottage and Station House) have servitude rights of access from their entrances to the A9. The Council will acquire ownership of the existing access road in order formally to extinguish these servitude rights for which the owners of these properties will be paid the appropriate compensation. Ownership of the existing roadway will allow the Council to erect physical barriers to prevent unauthorised access to and from the A9 at this point.

Project Programme

- 5.12 It is anticipated that a planning application for the project will be submitted within the next 3 months.
- 5.13 Taking account of the CPO process, and assuming a worst case scenario that an inquiry may be necessary, the land could be vested in the Council by October/November 2013.
- 5.14 The construction period for the proposed link road is estimated at up to 6 months. This means that the link road can be completed well in advance of the Ryder Cup in September 2014.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Head of Democratic Services, the Acting Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The current total estimated cost of the proposed link road and car park is estimated at £3,850,560.

7.2 The Council has committed funding to the project as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| • Capital Grant to Tactran | £1.2m |
| • Composite Capital Programme | <u>£1.5m</u> |
| Total | £2.7m |

7.3 Taking account of the optimism bias of 44%, there is a funding shortfall of around £1.151m, and the Scottish Government has been asked to contribute to the cost of the works through Transport Scotland. The works are in line with the NTS (see section 3 of this report) and it anticipated that Transport Scotland are likely to be supportive of the proposal,

8. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

8.1 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 three Objectives relevant to this project are as follows:-

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

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

9.1 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.

9.2 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

10. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

10.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

10.2 The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The current access to Gleneagles Railway Station is substandard, poses a road safety risk and inhibits the wider use of the rail network from both Strathallan and from the wider Strathearn district.
- 11.2 It is proposed to construct a new link road from the A823/A9 roundabout to Gleneagles Station. A preferred alignment has been identified and negotiations with the relevant landowners are underway. However, for the reasons set out in this report, it is proposed to promote a CPO to run in parallel with the negotiations in case some of the land cannot be purchased by agreement.
- 11.3 In summary, the proposed link road will facilitate safe access to Gleneagles Station and properties in the area for traffic from all directions. It will allow the closure of two substandard accesses from the A9. It will enhance the use of Gleneagles Station as a local transport hub by allowing local and longer distance buses to link in with the station directly. It will also increase the accessibility of rail travel to the wider communities of Strathearn and Strathallan.

JIM IRONS
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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.

- Report to Council 9 February 2012, Composite Capital Budget 2012/13 to 2016/17 (12/53)

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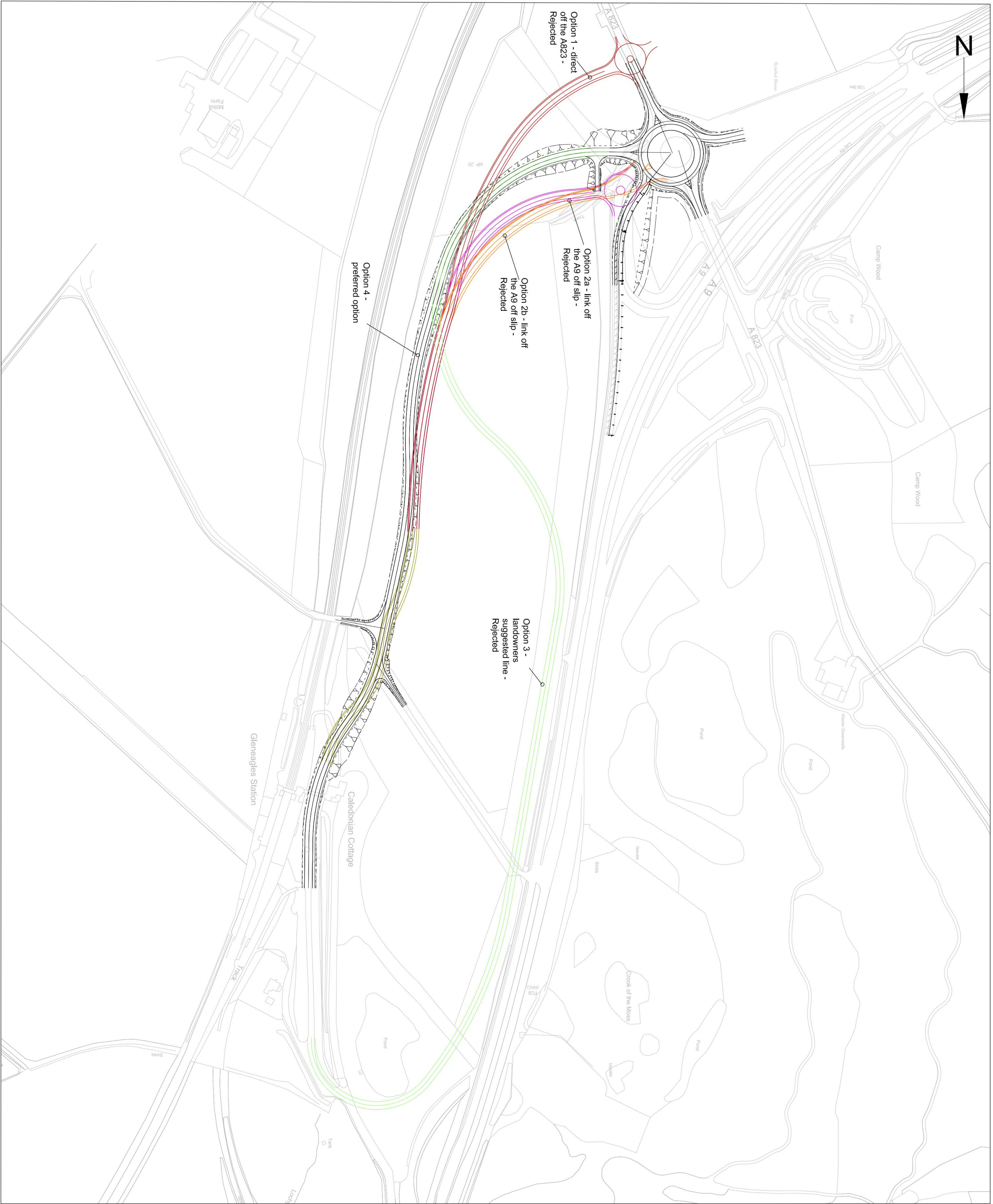
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Project
Gleneagles Station Link Road

Drawing

Alignment proposals

Options considered

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Drawn by: PC | Date: 13/06/12 |
| Checked by: PM | Date: -/-/12 |
| Approved by: PM | Date: -/-/2012 |
| Drawing No: | Revision |
| PK/SK/218 | - |

Drawing Scale: NTS