

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

To: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: A80 STEPPS TO HAGGS: UPGRADE PROPOSALS: ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 10 January 2005	Ref: HQ/TT/03/02	

1. Purpose of Report

This report outlines the proposals as presented by the Scottish Executive in a full environmental statement for the upgrade of the remaining non-motorway section of the A80 between Stepps and Haggs. This supersedes the previous report on the A80 phase 1 upgrade as submitted to the Planning and Environment Committee on 4 February 2004. Recommendations are provided regarding the consultation by the Scottish Executive on these proposals.

2. Background

- 2.1 The section of the A80 Trunk Road within North Lanarkshire is the only section of this key strategic route which is non-motorway, with sub standard carriageway alignment, cross-section and junction layouts. At peak hours, the high volume of traffic results in congestion, delays and consequential rat-running on Council maintained roads. Increased wear and tear on both Trunk and Council roads is inevitable, increasing maintenance requirements and introducing further delays on adjacent roads with a lack of capacity and no suitable diversion routes. The Council has been pressing for an upgrade since 1996.
- 2.2 Both the A80 and A8 were included in the comprehensive Central Scotland Transport Corridor Studies commissioned by the Scottish Executive in 1999 and completed in mid 2002. The decision of the Scottish ministers on the studies were announced in January 2003, and in the case of both routes the decision was for an upgrade of the existing roads to full grade separated motorway status. The Scottish ministers also gave a commitment that the upgrades would be completed by the year 2010 and that there would be complementary improvements to bus and rail services.
- 2.3 North Lanarkshire Council is a statutory consultee on the road proposals under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 because of our interests as the local roads authority.
- 2.4 Initially, consideration was given by the ministers to phase the upgrading works to enable the most critical highly trafficked section between Mollinsburn and Auchinkilns (phase 1), to be carried out in advance. With this in mind, an environmental statement, draft line and side road orders for phase 1 were made available for public inspection in January 2004. In considering the views of this consultation exercise which indicated that a public enquiry would be required, there was no advantage to be gained in phasing the work and the full length of the project has now been issued for consultation except for the phase 1 orders which have not been re-issued.

3. A80 Upgrade Proposals/Considerations

- 3.1 The upgrade proposals are set out in the Environmental Statement and associated drawings which were issued for public inspection on 26 November 2004 in conjunction with the draft Orders relating to the upgrade of the road. Copies of the documents were made available at Fleming House, Cumbernauld, Cumbernauld Library, Stepps Library, Moodiesburn Library, Abrohill Library, Chryston Library and appropriate locations in neighbouring authorities. A manned public exhibition of the proposals was also held in Moodiesburn, Bron Way, Cumbernauld and Banknock with members invited to a preview in Cumbernauld on 8 December 2004. The closing date for representations to the Scottish Executive Transport and Lifelong Learning department is 14 January 2005.
- 3.2 The Draft Orders issued for inspection are as follows:
- a) The M80/M73 Special Roads (Moodiesburn Bypass) scheme draft order.
 - b) The M80 Special Road (Auchenkilns to Haggs) Scheme draft order.
 - c) The M80/M73 Special Roads (Moodiesburn Bypass) (Side Roads) draft order.
 - d) The A80 Trunk Road (Auchenkilns to Haggs) (Side Roads) draft order.
 - e) The M80/M73 Special Roads (Moodiesburn Bypass) Compulsory Purchase draft order.
 - f) The M80 Special Road (Auchenkilns to Haggs) Compulsory Purchase draft order.
 - g) The M80 Special Road (Mollinsburn to Auchenkilns) Trunk Road Appropriation draft order.
 - h) The M80 Special Road (Auchenkilns to Haggs) Trunk Road draft Appropriation Order.
 - i) The M80/M73 (Moodiesburn Bypass) Special Roads (Extinguishment of Public Rights of Way) draft order.
 - j) The M80/A80 Trunk Roads (Stepps to Moodiesburn) Detrunking draft order.
 - k) The Stepps Bypass (M80) (City of Glasgow District Boundary to Crow Wood) (Connecting Roads) Special Road (Revocation) Draft Scheme.
The Stepps Bypass (M80) (City of Glasgow District Boundary to Crow Wood) Special Roads (Variation) draft scheme.
- 3.3 The Special Roads Order effectively indicates the intention to construct a new section of motorway off-line from the existing M80 at Hornhill Junction to Mollinsburn and upgrade the existing A80 trunk road to special road (ie motorway) status between Mollinsburn and Haggs Junction. To allow the road to meet motorway standards, consequential changes are required relating to side roads, traffic restrictions, land acquisition and the detrunking of sections of road which will revert to North Lanarkshire Council for future maintenance.
- 3.4 The main components of the scheme can be summarised as follows:
- (a) Stepps to Mollinsburn is 8 kms of new off-line road passing through agricultural land north of Muirhead, Moodiesburn and Chryston and rejoining the route of the existing A80 at Mollinsburn. The section includes a dual two-lane carriageway with full hard shoulders, a new interchange at Mollinsburn with realigned side roads and three new overbridges. It also includes new structures at Hornhill Junction, Drumsack Road, Lindsaybeg Road, Strathkelvin Railway Path and Auchengeich Road.
 - (b) Mollinsburn to Auchenkilns proposes 2.7 kms of on-line upgrade along the route of the existing A80. The components include a dual three lane carriageway between Mollinsburn and Low Wood and a dual two lane carriageway between Low Wood and Auchenkilns, all with full construction hard shoulders. Improvements are also proposed to Low Wood Junction along with the reconstruction of North Road overbridge, the reconstruction of two culverts and the closure of Dalshannon Junction.
 - (c) Auchenkilns to Haggs is approximately 7.3 kms of on-line upgrade, dual two-lane carriageway with climbing lanes and hard shoulders where feasible. Within the Council area all structures (overbridges and underpasses) are retained and widened where required.
- 3.5 Over the length of the proposals, there are several paths and rights of way used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians severed by the proposed scheme. It is intended that all will be realigned or diverted with minimal affect on the users.

3.6 In addition to the above works, the following components will be incorporated within the scheme:

- Construction of a road drainage system with retention ponds for the treatment and attenuation of road run-off and accidental spills to accord with sustainable drainage principles.
- Construction of noise attenuation screening (substantial fencing and/or earthworks) and the use of low noise road surfacing to reduce traffic noise and vibration. It is estimated that around 3,200 properties will experience a reduction in noise levels whilst around 400 properties will experience an increase.
- Extensive landscape planting to enhance the visual impact.

4. Comments

- 4.1 The need for an upgrading of the A80 to motorway standard is not in question, particularly as the condition of the existing road is such that the carriageway is at the end of its structural life and further substantial maintenance work will be required as a matter of urgency. This would include full reconstruction of the carriageway, upgrading of the drainage, strengthening and remedial works to structures and safety fencing. This is necessary otherwise safety of the travelling public will be compromised. Such works are extensive, will cause severe disruption and would still leave a road with substandard geometry and junctions.
- 4.2 The consequential changes to junction arrangements will have implications for the local road network, however the changes are likely to improve road safety, and would be desirable without any upgrade to the A80. The Department has maintained close liaison with Jacobs Babbie, the Consultants working on the proposals, with regular meetings at each development stage, and an opportunity to promote the Council's interests to ensure the maximum benefit is gained from the scheme. Many of the comments put forward by the Council have been taken on board and appropriate alterations made to the scheme and this is reflected within the Environmental Statement. During the construction of the scheme, two lanes will be maintained open in each direction to minimise the risk of congestion and ensure no significant impact on travellers.
- 4.3 Traffic modelling of the main line and the adjacent and connecting Council roads has been undertaken in some depth, incorporating existing robust strategic transport models for Central Scotland. The results indicate that on the trunk road, the do-minimum scenario (ie continual maintenance) does not cope with the demand in 2010 and beyond even in the off peak situation. Under the proposed scheme, traffic growth is accommodated at 2010 although the level of service will deteriorate beyond this time, but not to the extent of the do-minimum. This meets with the commitment of the Executive to constrain future growth in traffic levels and supports the current proposals to enhance rail services, the Council itself being involved in developing Park and Ride schemes at Greenfaulds, Gartcosh and Allandale. The results of the model also show that although traffic demand is greater under the proposed scheme, traffic levels are generally lower on the Council road network. (Average 11% decrease in 2010)
- 4.4 An assessment has been undertaken within the environmental statement on geology, soils and contaminated land issues. The report deals with mine workings, and peat removal but makes little comment on the treatment of the known naturally occurring methane gas in the area which requires to be considered in more detail with appropriate remedial measures proposed.
- 4.5 Water quality and resources have been assessed with mitigation measures proposed where considered necessary, but the overall indication is of net benefit.
- 4.6 The environmental assessment confirms that there will be disruption during construction with inevitable noise, dust and vibration. Mitigation measures will be put in place. It should be noted that if the upgrade did not go ahead, substantial and extensive reconstruction works will be required on the road to maintain it fit for use. These works would also cause significant disruption with less long-term benefit.
- 4.7 The Transport Minister has made it clear that the environmental statement and published orders are for the on-line route only, and all documentation issued in support of the Draft Orders relate solely to the on-line upgrade proposal. However, the Minister has also stated that should objectors wish to present evidence in relation to alternative options, such as the Kelvin Valley route, at any subsequent public local enquiry these will be considered thoroughly and fairly.

- 4.8 In an earlier report dated 12 August 1996 the Council indicated its preference for the Kelvin Valley route. However, in reaching this decision, it was noted that the balance between the two options was very fine. This decision was subsequently amended in a report dated 4 February 2004 because the Scottish Executive had consistently indicated that the Kelvin Valley route was not an option.
- 4.9 Notwithstanding the above, the current proposals would bring about a much needed upgrade of this key route in North Lanarkshire. These proposals will have a reduced environmental impact compared with the earlier on-line upgrade proposals because of the reduced carriageway widths adjacent to Condorrat and Cumbernauld. In addition, the proposals are capable of delivery by 2010. Any alternative proposal would have to be the subject of a Stage 3 design and environmental assessment and publication of associated line orders, which would result in a significant delay to the project. Such delay will result in the need for substantial and extensive reconstruction works, which will cause significant disruption to adjacent communities.

5. Corporate Considerations

- 5.1 With the detrunking of sections of the current A80, particularly Hornshill Junction to Crow Wood and Crow Wood to Mollinsburn, responsibility for the future maintenance of these lengths of road will in all probability rest with the Council, increasing the overall maintenance costs for the road network.

6. Sustainability

- 6.1 Sustainability issues have been considered within the environmental report in terms of the following:
- Traffic volume constraints designed in.
 - Increase in public transport provision and infrastructure.
 - On-line road reduces impact on land use elsewhere.
 - Drainage system designed in accordance with best practice for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 It is recommended that Committee should:-
- (a) Accept the proposed on-line upgrade as being a much-needed improvement of this key route in North Lanarkshire.
 - (b) Press the Scottish executive to complete the upgrade proposals by 2010.
 - (c) Press the Scottish Executive to maintain their commitment to substantial early investment in bus and rail infrastructure in the corridor.



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(30 December 2004)

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report please contact Tom Peebles on 01236 616406.