



National Planning Framework 2: Response to Scottish Government consultation

There is much to welcome in the NPF2 discussion draft. The general philosophical approach is clear and supported with many useful facts and comment.

However, **we believe that the national priorities chosen are at odds with the evidence to hand and the sustainability arguments advanced in the draft.**

We do not believe that the first national planning priority for Scotland should be the provision of an *additional* Forth road crossing at Queensferry. The present road bridge can be saved. Any new road crossing will therefore not be a "replacement" but yet another road crossing of the Forth - and with the prospect of this new crossing soon being filled. More roads = more traffic.

We very much hope that de-humidification of the cables will prove able to sufficiently halt the corrosion found within them to allow the current bridge many years of future service. However, even if this fails, full replacement or augmentation of the cables is technically feasible - and at a cost of around £100m vs. £4200m for a new bridge.

How many people could be rescued from fuel poverty or hospitals built, etc. for that huge sum of money?

Land use patterns premised on car commuting would only be reinforced if a new road crossing were to be built. We would therefore submit that plans for such a crossing be dropped and investment directed instead into sustainable transport and sustainable communities. Fife should build workplaces as well as new homes.

Recognising the need for cross-Forth travel, we welcome the suggestion in the draft (para. 215) that a new rail line be built between Inverkeithing and Halbeath to allow faster rail journey times north to Perth, Inverness and Dundee/Aberdeen. This does not require a new Forth road crossing to be provided - this could run from Ferrytoll along the alignment of the M90.

Rail fares in the Edinburgh area are considerably dearer than in the Glasgow area where SPT services provide Scotland with the UK's second largest rail commuter network outside London and the south-east. We would suggest that commuter fares in and around Edinburgh be reduced to the level of those in the SPT area and that significant capacity enhancement of rail infrastructure in and around Edinburgh be pursued to increase rail's modal share and scope of geographical coverage (integrated also with tram, bus, cycling and walking opportunities).

We note the national priority accorded in the draft to both Grangemouth and Rosyth ports. We welcome this. These developments should help to form a major part of a strategy to remove as much HGV traffic as possible from the current road bridge. Much of it could be routed also via the motorway network and onto rail.

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Submission on behalf of the ForthRight Alliance, 15th April 2008