



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

## **ARTERIAL ROAD LINKS INTO THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS**

### **Note for HITRANS Meeting 3 October 2003**

At the last HITRANS meeting in August it was agreed:

- ? To support the A82 action group set up by the Lochaber and Oban and Lorn area committees of the two Councils,
- ? And to consider the establishment of closer working arrangements with the Scottish executive on improvement programmes for the A9 and A96.

With regard to the A82, Scott Wilson has been appointed by the Scottish Executive to prepare a route appraisal and action plan for the section between Tarbert and Fort William. Officers of the two Councils and the Enterprise Network have agreed to complete their route strategy study by the end of November to feed into the Scott Wilson work. Officers have also agreed in principle that HITRANS and HIE will jointly commission with Scott Wilson, economic appraisal of the wider benefits to the broad community served by the route which will arise from road improvement. I have also asked that HITRANS be granted a close working relationship with Scott Wilson during the study, not just as another stakeholder consultee. So far the consultation process has not been clarified.

With regard to the other two routes I have met with the Scottish Executive officials overseeing development.

The A9, as reported at the last meeting, has a number of schemes for improvement south of Inverness. The concept is to widen the road to 3 lanes north of Blair Atholl with some minor extension of the existing dual carriageway and to investigate more dualling between Pitlochry and Perth. Some test 3 lane sections will be developed soon in Badenoch and Strathspey, to monitor safety and reduction of platooning. However there is no firm programming for whole route improvement.

The A96 Public Inquiry for the Fochabers by-pass has commenced and a 3 lane section west of Nairn may be introduced shortly to monitor safety and reduce platooning. Otherwise there is no overall programme for the route.

#### **I would recommend:**

- ? That we press the Minister for special consultation status with Scott Wilson on the A82, and agree to share the economic appraisal work.
- ? That we meet with NESTRANS to produce a joint view on the transport improvements that we want to pursue in the Inverness Aberdeen corridor
- ? That we develop the case for bringing forward a programme of 3 lane improvement for most of the A9.

Howard Brindley  
HITRANS Co-ordinator  
26 September 2003