

REPORT FROM CAITHNESS PARTNERSHIP

International Association of Transport Professionals
Conference 27 – 29 September 2011

The conference considered in turn each mode of transport taking into account international connectivity as well as domestic. Several of the guest speakers noted that the UK's transport connectivity is ranked 26th in the world, which is poor in relation to their overall GDP ranking of 10th in the world. Scotland in particular requires increased external connectivity.

It was recognised by MPs and MSPs present that capital investment in the transport infrastructure is required as it is an essential driver to stimulate economic growth, and long term growth. However, during the remaining 3 years of the Strategic Transport Project Review (STPR) capital funding is limited for the Highlands. Only 3 of the 29 STPR projects are based in the Highlands, with the central belt claiming much of the funds for their major improvement programme including the Forth Road Bridge. All capital used to improve the transport infrastructure must represent good value for money.

It was noted that there is a need to “unlock development” within the local infrastructure and Cllr David Flear ensured that the ‘pinch point’ Berriedale Braes was aired during several of the sessions, with the low cost improvement proposal, indicating good value for money. Sam McNaughton, Head of Transport (THC) stressed the need for moving projects to a ‘shovel ready’ stage, and included Berriedale Braes and widening of the A99 north and south of Keiss in the imminent improvement projects required within the Highlands

CO2 emissions & logistics were discussed at length and all sectors appear to be making progress towards reduction in emissions.

One of the main points taken forward from the IATP conference is that there is no joined up policy for Scotland's transport. Each sector have their own policy but an overarching strategy outlining short, medium and long term plans is missing. The production of such a document would maximise collaboration between all four transport sectors and exploit the connectivity potential for Scotland at an international and domestic level.

Koreen MacDougall
Caithness Partnership
1st October 2011

Enc: letter to Transport Minister (follow up to conference)

Our Ref: JG/KM/CTF/2011/KB

Date: 04-10-2011

Keith Brown
Minister for Housing and Transport
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Dear Mr. Brown

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your informative and positive address at the recent International Association of Transport Professionals Conference, and I was pleased to hear your views regarding the need for capital investment in the transport infrastructure and how it is vital for Scotland's economic growth.

Councillor David Flear was also delighted to briefly discuss with you the points raised at our meeting with you in March of this year regarding the A9 Berriedale Braes hairpin bend, a recognised 'pinch point' that is a currently a barrier to the potential economic growth within Caithness, and he warmly welcomed your interest in the low cost proposal for improvements.

I have enclosed for your information; the A9 Berriedale Braes Improvement Geotechnical, Design and Construction Assessment report. The very positive conclusion in this report has been enthusiastically received by the funders; HITRANS, The Highland Council and Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd.

In his presentation at the IATP conference Sam MacNaughton, Head of Transport The Highland Council identified Berriedale Braes as a project that now requires to become 'shovel ready', in the anticipation that funds become available from Transport Scotland. The proposed £2.3 M cost of improvements represents excellent value for money, an essential factor in any project being put forward to the Scottish Government.

Following on from the positive discussions at the IATP conference and on behalf of the Caithness Transport Forum, I would like to invite you to visit Caithness and view

Caithness
partnership



Rhind House
West Banks Avenue
Wick
Caithness
KW1 5LZ

Tel: 01955 606 483
Fax: 01955 606 974

Email:
caithnesspartnership@btinternet.com

www.caitness-partnership.org.uk

Caithness Partnership comprises the
Following organisations:

Association of Caithness Community Councils

Caithness Business Club

Caithness Chamber of Commerce

HIE Caithness & Sutherland

Caithness Voluntary Group

Forest Enterprise

Highlands & Islands Federation of
Small Businesses

Highland & Islands Fire & Rescue Service

National Farmers Union of Scotland

NHS Highland

Northern Constabulary

Scottish Water

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Scottish Natural Heritage

Scrabster Harbour Trust

The Highland Council

The North Highland College

Thurso & Wick Trade Union Council

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

Visit Scotland

Wick Harbour Authority

first hand not only the notorious Berriedale Braes but also the key enablers in the area's transport infrastructure. The Caithness Transport Forum would be delighted to host your visit, and arrange a tour of the three harbours that are developing to meet the needs of the emerging renewable energy sector as well as Georgemas Junction, the freight terminal that may also play a part in assisting the regeneration of the area.

Rob Gibson, MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross is committed to the Berriedale Braes improvement scheme and we would like to invite him also, once a suitable date has been scheduled into your diary.

Please let us know whether you are available and willing to visit Caithness to view the transport infrastructure and the Caithness Partnership, who facilitate the Caithness Transport Forum will make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely

John Green
Chair

Enclosure A9 Berriedale Braes Improvement
Geotechnical, Design and Construction
Assessment.