
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: Trunk road development and access with specific reference to the A9 at Crubenmore

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Purpose

To update the Forum on the issue regarding access across the A9 at Crubenmore, Newtonmore and seek advice in how adverse impacts on public access from future developments can be avoided.

Advice Sought

The Forum is invited to consider how best to assist Transport Scotland and other relevant agencies in taking account of potential impacts on all forms of access in, around and affected by the development.

Background

A9 developments at Crubenmore

1. The issue of road safety has always been at the forefront of the improvement to the A9 at Crubenmore south of Newtonmore. At present there is a short section of dual carriage way which has been an accident black spot for a number of years. To deal with this issue the dual carriage way is being extended northwards towards Newtonmore. As a consequence of the road being dualled the speed limit will increase to 70mph; a safety barrier will be installed down the central reservation and a safety barrier will be installed along significant sections of the west verge. Work has already begun on this section.
2. Transport Scotland have led on developing the scheme and conducted a four stage process :
 - a) A public exhibition in the Aviemore Library from December 2006 to February 2007;
 - b) The publication and consultation on the Environmental Statement and draft Road Orders in February 2007;
 - c) Draft Compulsory Purchase order made in March 2008 resulting in two objections then subsequently removed;
 - d) Compulsory Purchase Order made in November 2009 and subject to a six week consultation.
3. In tandem with this process Transport Scotland consulted with a wide variety of stakeholders on the designs for the scheme including:

- Highland Council
- Northern Constabulary
- Landowners
- The British Horse Society
- Cycling groups
- Scotways
- The Cairngorms National Park Authority

Through the consultation process and environmental assessment, Transport Scotland identified that the scheme would have an impact on the NCN Route 7 cycle path (UBS9) and UBS12, both of which have been accommodated within the scheme. They also identified the Right of Way, referred to as the Wade Road, which starts at Nuide and terminates at the A9 (point A on the attached map). No provision for crossing the A9 to access or leave this route was made within the scheme.

4. The scheme development makes provision for vehicle access on and off the A9 at Etteridge Lodge (point B) by way of a gap in the central reservation.
5. The issue was first brought to our attention by Mr R Ormiston of the Newtonmore Riding Centre in November 2010, who raised concerns that the needs of horse riders had not been taken into account as there are no safe crossing points planned in the development. The focus for these concerns centred on the view that in developing the scheme, Transport Scotland had not taken into account the popularity of the Wade Road given that it is a Right of Way and appears in numerous publications.
6. Other members of the public have lent support to Mr Ormiston's campaign and as a result there has been a high degree of interest from press, local councillors and MSPs. Transport Scotland have indicated that, due to safety concerns they are not making provision for pedestrian, cycle or horse crossing of the A9 within the dualling scheme.
7. As the Access Authority the CNPA has written to Transport Scotland asking them to consider, as part of the current scheme, facilities to allow safe crossing and offering a meeting. We do concur with their view that the crossing of the A9 is inherently dangerous but we feel, given the strength of local feeling and the likelihood that the public will try and cross anyway such a crossing point needs to be accommodated.

Future impacts on outdoor access from trunk road and arterial developments.

8. It is a matter of some regret that none of the relevant agencies responded to the consultation that Transport Scotland undertook. From CNPA's perspective this oversight arose through the matter being considered for natural heritage impacts only. CNPA has now developed a more robust method for dealing with such consultations and an early dialogue with Transport Scotland will help streamline the consultation process.
9. What the case illustrates is the need to provide clear and timely information to Transport Scotland and other bodies who lead on trunk road and arterial developments. It is also clear that undue reliance has been placed on the Core Paths Plan and Rights of Way without considering their importance in providing links to the wider path network.

The Core Paths Plan and Right of Way network do however present a useful starting point for planners and developers.

10. We welcome the LOAF's views on how to best promote the context of Core Paths and Rights of Way in the National Park and how we might encourage Transport Scotland, planners and other stakeholders to look at the wider picture when considering the impacts on outdoor access.

11. The Forum is invited to consider how best to assist Transport Scotland and other relevant agencies in taking account of potential impacts on all forms of access in, around and affected by the development.

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