



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 6 March 2013

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**INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2013, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)

\*Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)

Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab)

\*Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

David Climie (Transport Scotland)

Lawrence Shackman (Transport Scotland)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Steve Farrell

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 5



## Scottish Parliament

### Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee

Wednesday 6 March 2013

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (Maureen Watt):** Good morning everyone. I welcome you to the sixth meeting in 2013 of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee. I remind everyone to switch off their mobile phones, BlackBerrys and any devices that may affect the broadcasting system.

We have received apologies from Margaret McCulloch.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. I seek the committee's agreement to take agenda item 3 in private to allow us to consider potential issues of subsidiarity in the European Union document as listed on the agenda. Is that agreed?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Forth Replacement Crossing

10:01

**The Convener:** Agenda item 2 is the Forth replacement crossing update number 5. I welcome David Climie, project director, and Lawrence Shackman, project manager, from the Forth replacement crossing team, and I invite them to make opening remarks.

**David Climie (Transport Scotland):** Thank you, convener. I am pleased to be able to report continuing good progress on all aspects of work for the Forth replacement crossing since our last appearance before the committee in September 2012. In particular, three of the four contracts have now been completed successfully and progress on the principal contract for the main crossing and approach roads continues on time and on budget.

On the Fife intelligent transport system contract, the 18 gantries were installed during September and October last year. Following the final testing and commissioning, the system went fully operational on 4 December. That has involved the use of variable mandatory speed limits during periods of traffic congestion and southbound bus hard-shoulder running from junction 3 at Halbeath to junction 1 at Admiralty. The opening of the scheme was preceded by extensive bus driver training and a public information campaign on how the scheme operates.

On the M9 junction 1A contract, work progressed extremely well during the autumn. The significant paving works that we mentioned in our last appearance here were completed over four weekends during October and November, rather than the six weekends originally anticipated. That good progress meant that we were able to remove all the lane restrictions and also open the westbound slip road to the M9 towards Stirling just before the Christmas holidays.

Following the completion of the outstanding minor works during January, the 40mph speed restriction was removed and the junction was fully opened to traffic by the Minister for Transport and Veterans on 1 February, two months ahead of the contract schedule. This scheme again involved the use of variable mandatory speed limits during periods of traffic congestion and bus hard-shoulder running southbound from the M9 spur down to the Newbridge roundabout.

The third contract to be completed is the contact and education centre located in the Forth Estuary Transport Authority car park on the south side of the Forth road bridge. The transport minister visited the exhibition area on 21 January. On 30 and 31 January we also held seven sessions of project update meetings there for the media,

elected representatives, key stakeholders and members of the public. Feedback from those sessions was generally very positive and the CEC is fully open now for bookings by interested groups. The Traffic Scotland control centre in part of the building is expected to become operational later this spring.

On the principal contract, on the north side the final blast at Whinny hill took place on 1 March. Material from there has continued to be moved to the Ferrytoll embankment, more than 50 per cent of which has now been constructed. Two new bridges crossing the Rosyth railway branch line in the Ferrytoll area are nearly complete. The realignment of the B981 from North Queensferry and Castlandhill Road from Rosyth away from the Ferrytoll roundabout is on target to be completed this year. It is a requirement of the contract that work on those two local roads is completed in advance of any work requiring traffic management on the A90 main road. In addition, excavation for the north bridge abutment is continuing on the north side and the foundation for land-based pier N2 has been cast.

On the south side, the foundations for approach viaduct piers S7 and S8 on the land have been completed and the excavation for the south abutment and the assembly area for the south approach viaduct steelwork have been completed in Echline field. Excavation work for the South Queensferry junction is continuing and should be completed in the next couple of weeks. That will be followed by the construction of the roundabout and two overbridges during this year. That work is being carried out largely offline in order to minimise any disruption to traffic on the A904. It is expected that the A904 will be re-routed on to the new alignment and through the roundabout in the spring of 2014.

On the marine side of things, a huge amount of activity can be seen taking place in the Forth with barges, floating cranes and other marine plant being used at the various foundation locations. The centre tower foundation on Beamer rock is the most advanced, with its 10 sections of cofferdam put in place between November and January. The inside of the cofferdam has now been sealed and we are preparing to de-water the inside to give us dry working conditions to construct the centre tower base concrete. Installation of a tower crane will commence in the next couple of weeks and that will climb progressively higher as the tower leg is constructed over the next 18 months.

The north and south tower caissons have been sunk to their design positions and the bottom edges have been jet-grouted to allow the final excavation to bedrock to take place. The rock surface will then be cleaned in advance of pouring the underwater concrete plugs which will seal the

bottom of the caissons and then allow the water inside to be pumped out down to -14m level. This will create a dry working area for the construction of the reinforced concrete tower foundations. By the end of this year, all three towers will be clearly visible as they climb towards their 210m finished height, which is 50m higher than the existing Forth road bridge towers.

The final one of the three caissons, located at pier S1 on the south side, is still being sunk into the bed of the Forth and has just over 4m to go to reach the final design level. That work will be completed in April.

Rectangular steel cofferdams have been installed by floating crane at the approach pier locations N1, S5 and S4. Those are currently being sealed and prepared for de-watering. At the seawall at Port Edgar a temporary bund and sheet piles have been installed to create a dry area for the construction of pier S6.

Fabrication of the approach viaduct deck steelwork will commence at Cleveland Bridge in Darlington in April with the first deliveries to the south assembly area expected to start in the summer. Fabrication of the cable-stayed bridge steelwork is progressing well in China and the first shipment is due to arrive in Rosyth in early 2014.

To summarise, three of the four contracts are complete and operational and the fourth contract is progressing well, with 2013 seeing the transition from underwater to above-water works on the main crossing. Overall the project continues to progress on time and on budget, and we continue to expect to have the whole project open by late 2016.

**The Convener:** Thank you. Mr Shackman, do you want to add anything?

**Lawrence Shackman (Transport Scotland):** No, not at this stage.

**The Convener:** As both members and witnesses will be aware, the committee consulted local community representatives in advance of this meeting to ask for comments on the process of community engagement and any concerns about the project. Members will ask questions in that area.

I start by asking you to highlight some of the key events that are likely to occur in the next six months that would be of interest to Parliament. I went to a meeting about the bridge which was very technical but very interesting. I understand that the concrete pour is a very tricky operation that has to be got right. Are there particular weather conditions that must be right for the pouring to be successful?

**David Climie:** Yes. There are a number of challenges ahead. It is very encouraging that we

have been able to make very good progress in the calm weather conditions of the last month. One of the key things that affects the work—particularly the marine work—is wind. When the wind gets up, it makes the water in the Forth very rough and it can be difficult to get the workforce or materials out to the marine working areas. That is a key area and we have to keep a close eye on it; we monitor the weather forecast very carefully.

The next six months will be a transition from the underwater operations, which we want to get prepared and complete. Once we complete the excavation, it is particularly important to ensure that we have a clean rock surface before pouring the underwater concrete. The last thing we want is to have dirt and material that should not be there between the underwater concrete and the rock. We need to have a good key.

As you heard, the concreting operation involves large concrete pours. The largest one, on the south tower, involves about 18,000m<sup>3</sup> of concrete. That will be a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week operation that will take about 10 days. We have established our own concrete batching plant in Rosyth to ensure that we can control our own destiny in terms of concrete supply. All the concrete will be produced within the Forth Ports area at Rosyth. We have four separate barges, each with six concrete mixers, that we can load up progressively. They will be travelling backwards and forwards over the 3km from the quayside at Rosyth out to the caissons.

We will be looking at a weather window of between seven and 10 days to carry out the work at the south tower. We have an advantage in that we will be doing some preliminary work on the approach viaduct piers, such as S4 and S5. As they have much smaller concrete pours, we can use them to ensure that all the logistics work, the cleaning is good and we have established all the correct procedures. By the time we do the largest concrete pour for the south tower in the summer, we should be well prepared.

**The Convener:** I understand that there were embankment difficulties by North Queensferry that you did not quite expect. Can you provide more detail about them?

**David Climie:** It is not the case that they were not expected: the Ferrytoll embankment itself is the largest to be built in Scotland and it goes across several different areas of ground. Seven different sets of ground conditions exist under the embankment. There is the old St Margaret's marsh; reclaimed land between what used to be the coastline and the new coastline; areas of contaminated land that we have to dig out and replace; and areas where we must put additional stabilisation into the ground to ensure that the embankment settles evenly.

Our uncertainty was about exactly how extensive each distinct area was and, in particular, about the interface between them. It is always a challenge on starting work to find out where the interfaces are and what that means, for example for the number of piles that have to be put in or the amount of soil that has to be replaced. It was a known uncertainty, if you like; we knew that there would be challenges and it was a case of meeting them as we progressed. Progress in that area is generally good.

**The Convener:** Okay.

**Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** BRIGS—the bridge replacement interests group south—and Queensferry and district community council have both raised concerns about Transport Scotland's response to several flooding incidents relating to the project. Can you explain what flood risk assessment was undertaken prior to the project starting and what flood risk mitigation was put in place?

**Lawrence Shackman:** The contractors are duty bound to have a management plan for dealing with many aspects of the project, and drainage is obviously one of those aspects. As the project progresses, drainage can be instigated across the site, whether that is temporary or permanent drainage or the use of permanent drainage for a temporary solution.

When we discussed the flooding issues at the last committee meeting, the project was at a stage where a lot of the works were just starting. Unfortunately, there was a period of intense and sustained rainfall, which affected not just South Queensferry but a lot of the central belt of Scotland. The incidents to which BRIGS and Queensferry and district community council are alluding happened at that time. Suffice it to say that drainage measures were starting to be implemented across the project but were not fully complete at that particular stage. They took effect shortly after that period and there have been no drainage problems since.

**Gordon MacDonald:** I understand that there have been nine flooding incidents since the project started, six of which took place between June and August 2012. I am well aware that the weather was bad last year, but as a former resident of South Queensferry for 20 years I am aware that there was virtually no flooding in that area prior to the project starting, going back to the early 1980s. I accept that there was some bad weather last year, but I am concerned that everything seems to point to the start of the project and that possibly there was inadequate flooding risk assessment in the first place.

**Lawrence Shackman:** One of the issues is that the A904 has a history of not being in the best of

conditions, as I understand from talking with the City of Edinburgh Council, which is responsible for it. Indeed, I believe that there are plans to reconstruct a lot of the A904 in the proximity of the approach roads to the crossing in the not-too-distant future, in recognition of the fact that the road condition is not as it should be—particularly the drainage.

The problems were regrettable, and we have the deepest sympathy for the people who were affected by incidents. Matters conspired—if you like—to cause problems that ordinarily we would not have expected.

10:15

**Gordon MacDonald:** In the minutes of a meeting of the community forum south, I read that Ewen Macdonell had

“advised best estimate of drainage work completion is towards the end of 2013/start of 2014.”

Does that mean that if we have a bad summer, as we had last year, householders in the Echline area of South Queensferry will suffer flooding again?

**Lawrence Shackman:** The risk of flooding is very minimal now, because a lot of measures have been put into play. There are temporary holding basins, and a vast amount of the construction has been excavated north of the A904. There is a big excavation for the junction at the A904, which can be used as a sump. Temporary pumps and outfalls are in place to cater for any major flooding event.

**Gordon MacDonald:** Thanks for the reassurance.

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** Concern has been expressed about the impact of mud and dust from construction vehicles and heavy goods vehicles, particularly on the A904 at Echline corner and in the Linn Mill area. What is being done to resolve problems, which include mud and dust being deposited on footways?

**Lawrence Shackman:** The main contractor is in control of his subcontractors. I think that he is sourcing material from the Winchburgh bing, with which most members will be familiar, and running road wagons along the A904, as he is perfectly entitled to do, to fill the embankment at Ferrytoll, which David Climie mentioned.

There are a number of wagon movements per day, and the contractor has been on at his subcontractor to ensure that he abides by his terms and conditions—road wagons must be cleaned and sheeted all the way from the bing in Winchburgh to the site on the north side of the Forth. It appears that one or two wagons have not been completely sheeted and properly covered, and there might have been instances when some

of the red blaes material that is being imported has been stuck underneath wagons and has been deposited on the road.

The Forth crossing bridge constructors consortium—the contractor—has been reviewing its processes to ensure that a minimal amount of material is deposited on the road and problems are minimised. I am not saying that there have not been issues with material on the A904; it is clear that there have been issues, because FCBC has cleaned the road—twice, I think. However, the condition of the A904 and the poor drainage have not helped in relation to clearing material away.

**Alex Johnstone:** Is it fair to say that you are aware of a problem and are trying to improve matters?

**Lawrence Shackman:** That is correct.

**Alex Johnstone:** You said that lorries are running along the A904. Something that emerged from the consultation that the committee carried out was concern that some HGVs associated with the project are driving at excessive speed on the A904. Respondents said that some drivers conduct themselves rather aggressively. Have you identified a problem in that regard and, if so, is there anything that you can do to prevent it?

**Lawrence Shackman:** The issue has been raised through the community forums and we have discussed it with FCBC, to ensure that, as far as possible, its subcontractor pays due regard to the temporary speed limit in the Echline area. We informed the traffic management working group, of which the police are a member, of the issue, and there have been spot speed checks.

Of course, enforcement of speed limits is a concern for the police. It is a problem, but it is a problem on many other roads, and we can only do what we can to try to ensure that the subcontractor adheres to the speed limits. The ultimate sanction, which I believe the subcontractor has applied, is to sack drivers for disobeying speed limits and not abiding by the codes of good practice that should have been adopted.

**Alex Johnstone:** The committee has heard concerns about adverse impacts from noise and vibration at the Echline corner construction site, including concerns that promised mitigation measures appear not to have been installed. Do you share those concerns? Can you explain why mitigation measures have not been installed?

**David Climie:** We always knew that there would be a number of issues with noise and vibration. We have a lot of construction work to do and we are working close to residential areas.

We have installed a considerable amount of monitoring equipment. We have put in place noise restrictions that are actually stricter than the levels



that are allowed by the code of construction practice. In our employer's requirements to FCBC, we lowered all the allowed thresholds by 5dB from those in the parliamentary act and the code of construction practice. Therefore, we have reduced the allowed levels of noise in our contract.

Having done that, we also had to put in place monitoring. We monitor regularly and we have a noise liaison group that meets monthly. We review the results of the monitoring, including any exceedances and any complaints that relate to noise. The noise liaison group members, who include people from the local authorities, make regular visits to various parts of the site where potentially noise-creating activities have been identified. Those are things such as excavation inside the caissons. Because the caissons are hollow, there can be noise if a bucket bangs on them. When excavated rock is dropped into an empty barge, that can cause reverberation. We have installed a lot of protective measures such as rubber matting and timber lining in the barges as additional mitigation to try to ensure that we use all best practical means to keep down the noise levels.

Having said that, there have been a small number of complaints, although I emphasise that it is a small number. I think that the average is between seven and eight complaints per month in total. For each complaint, we investigate what is causing the noise. All the mitigation measures that are required are being progressed, although, inevitably, not all of them could be put in place on day 1. Some of them take time, particularly when design input is involved and where the measures are close to existing roads. In that case, we have to think about how the traffic management will work when we install mitigation measures. We do not want to cause enormous disruption to the road network just to install a small amount of noise mitigation. In the Echline field area, the work is progressing down into cuttings and is now 9m down into the ground. There is natural shielding of the noise as the work goes further downwards.

On the outstanding mitigation measures, discussions are on-going with the residents who are involved. Some detailed proposals were put to them within the last week, and it is anticipated that the first part of the additional noise mitigation will be installed this spring.

**Alex Johnstone:** So it continues to be a work in progress.

**David Climie:** Yes.

**The Convener:** To follow up on that, BRIGS asserts that issues such as speeding vehicles and mud on the road have to be reported. That should not be the case. As you say, the contractor and subcontractors should have a grip on the situation

so that, for example, vehicles are washed properly to avoid putting mud on the road and drivers adhere to the speed limit. I am pleased to hear that measures have been taken, even to the extent of sacking people, but that should not really have to happen. The contractor and subcontractors should provide better supervision, rather than have the community feel that it is its responsibility to report things to the police or Transport Scotland. Are we going to see a bit of a culture change?

**David Climie:** I do not think that we need a culture change; we need to reinforce what we are already doing. I completely agree that it is not the public's responsibility to police such matters. We have been pushing extremely hard with FCBC and with our supervisors on the site, to ensure that they monitor such issues and draw them to our attention when measures are not being complied with.

We have a progress meeting with FCBC tomorrow morning and it is one of the key issues that I will be raising. It is not a new item—it is an issue that is raised regularly. We have been working with FCBC recently to install better wheel-washing facilities for the trucks at the Ferrytoll embankment area so that the trucks are clean before they go back on the roads. FCBC has control of the situation at the point at which the material has been deposited at Ferrytoll and the trucks are leaving FCBC's site and going back on to the public road network. That is an area that FCBC should control and we will ensure that it controls it.

Where FCBC needs to step up to the mark is at the other end of the supply chain, when vehicles are leaving the Winchburgh bing. It is about ensuring that, when the vehicles are coming fully loaded, the best possible conditions are put in place for vehicles leaving the bing.

There is a two-way push on the issue. We certainly need to look after our end—we will continue to increase our efforts on that—but it needs to work at the other end as well. We are applying whatever pressure that we can to make that happen.

**The Convener:** What about the specific issue of the tractor that pulls the fuel supply vehicle?

**David Climie:** I was not previously aware of that issue but, having received that information, I will look into it.

**Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP):** Good morning, gentlemen. I want to ask about air pollution and air quality monitoring, which are issues highlighted in BRIGS's submission to the committee.

During the Forth replacement crossing project objection stage, residents at Echline fought for proper air quality monitoring to be adopted. It was an integral part of the FRC project mitigation process. During the passage of the Forth Crossing Bill, the Scottish ministers undertook that that would happen. My understanding is that the air quality monitoring equipment has not been installed at Echline corner. Do you agree that that undertaking was given? If so, why has the equipment not been installed?

**Lawrence Shackman:** All the equipment has been installed for quite some time. At Echline, there was a problem with the monitoring device right on the corner. It was agreed that it would be installed in the residents' gardens but they refused to have it installed, so there was a delay in sourcing a power supply and so on as near to the location as possible.

**Jim Eadie:** When was it installed?

**Lawrence Shackman:** I cannot tell you off the top of my head but it has been installed for quite some time. We had alternative locations; in fact, I think that we have put in monitors in appropriate places, in consultation with City of Edinburgh Council, West Lothian Council, and the community councils. In some places, we have put in higher quality monitoring equipment than was originally anticipated in the contract.

The point I was coming to is that there is a lot of data on air quality. Echline corner has an air quality monitoring device. There are several other monitoring devices around from Echline corner, such as at Clufflats and Springfield along the western edge of Queensferry. All of the air quality data is gathered by the contractor, verified by us and published on our website. Generally, that is within a month. We were perhaps slightly slow to put it on the website and publish it at the beginning of the contract because we were getting up to speed with the monitoring equipment and ensuring that the data output is in a presentable format for the public.

**Gordon MacDonald:** Why was it necessary to put air quality monitoring equipment in gardens when the Echline area has wide grass verges adjacent to the road?

**Lawrence Shackman:** There was a commitment and undertaking—

**Gordon MacDonald:** To put it in someone's garden?

**Lawrence Shackman:** Yes.

**David Climie:** There is also the added benefit that if it is in somebody's garden it is less prone to vandalism and things like that.

**Gordon MacDonald:** Yes, but there is air quality monitoring equipment throughout Edinburgh that is on the pavement, adjacent to the road. I am a bit confused about why it would require to be put in a garden when there are quite large expanses of green areas adjacent to the road.

**David Climie:** As Lawrence Shackman says, there was a specific commitment that it would be in a particular garden.

**Gordon MacDonald:** To one particular household?

**David Climie:** That is correct.

**Gordon MacDonald:** The community forums have been operating for some time. How well are they operating?

10:30

**Lawrence Shackman:** We have had a number of meetings. During the early days of the contract, we held the first three meetings at two-monthly intervals—more frequently than the code of construction practice requires—to have a bedding-down period with all the new people involved in the project and to get up to speed, as there are normally a lot of issues at the start of a contract. We have settled into a three-monthly format. As far as possible, we have kept the issues at a strategic level—that was agreed in the terms of reference with the local community councils and BRIGS.

We have found that the north community forum has been a fairly even-keel forum. We have had a good exchange of views and we have discussed various strategic issues. We have given an information update on the project and provided a look ahead at the next three months as we have gone through the project.

I do not think that the community councils on the north side of the Forth responded to the committee's call for evidence, which perhaps indicates that they are pretty content with the process. The process has gone smoothly. We had a meeting only last week, and there were no problems.

The Kirkliston community forum focused on the M9 junction 1A works. A representative was vociferous about issues that included mud on the road and noise at night-time. Those issues were addressed not only through the forum but day to day through the community liaison officers who work for the contractor. The Kirkliston community forum has come to an end and we have offered Kirkliston community council the opportunity to sit on the south community forum, which is the closest to it geographically.

The south community forum is the hardest to manage with regard to the different people who come to its meetings. Representatives from BRIGS, Queensferry and district community council, Newton community council and the City of Edinburgh Council normally come to the meetings. Members of the public occasionally do so too.

In the beginning, an awful lot of small individual issues came to the forum, rather than it being kept at a strategic level. For example, one meeting started at 7 o'clock in the evening and lasted until at least 10.30 pm. Keeping a lot of the people at the forum for too long was unacceptable. We therefore invited individual members to the site office to explain that we wanted to keep things at a strategic level—as I said, that is covered in the terms of reference—and to find a way of streamlining meetings to make them more manageable. As a result, we optimised the meetings to two hours, which seems an appropriate length of time.

We have streamlined the project team's presentation—by the contractors and us—in relation to looking back at what has happened, looking forward to what is to come and identifying issues for future public meetings. David Climie mentioned that we had a public meeting about the South Queensferry junction. The project team also gives updates on the project in general in relation to the Queensferry junction and the diversion works there.

We give the community councils and BRIGS the opportunity to raise whatever issues they want to raise a week before the agendas go out, which provides an opportunity to keep topics strategic. If we went down to the nth degree and talked about, for example, someone having a hole in their fence, we would be at the meetings for ever. We need to keep discussions at a reasonable level. Issues such as the A904 and speeding, which affect a lot of the community, are discussed at length.

There has been an awful long list of action items, which is fine. A lot of the community issues come out at the start of the meeting and that can sometimes take at least 40 minutes, which is a good chunk of the meeting. We then discuss progress, and there is another part of the agenda for any specific community issues that are raised. BRIGS raises more community issues than anyone else, by quite a margin.

**Gordon MacDonald:** Are you saying that you do not discourage any community group from raising concerns at the community forums?

**Lawrence Shackman:** We absolutely do not discourage them. To make that plain, the minutes—which are published on our website—show that at the start of a meeting I go through its purpose and state that people have the chance to

raise any community issues towards the end of the meeting under any other business, if they were not raised as agenda items the week before the meeting.

**Gordon MacDonald:** I realise that you put that in the terms of reference at the beginning of a meeting. Is that also why you say that observers are welcome to attend but should not participate?

**Lawrence Shackman:** That is part of the terms of reference as well. We try to keep participation to the community representatives.

**Gordon MacDonald:** If the forum is to be a two-way discussion with the local community rather than talking at it, there should be a balance that involves listening to what people say.

I understand from the evidence that BRIGS presented that an agreed format for the agenda was set out with Transport Scotland in 2011, in which 30 minutes were allocated to community concerns. Why was that dropped from the south community forum's fourth meeting and reinstated only after the intervention by my colleague Colin Keir?

**Lawrence Shackman:** No concerns were raised by the community at that meeting.

**Gordon MacDonald:** No community concerns were raised.

**Lawrence Shackman:** No—no one raised any concerns at that meeting.

**Gordon MacDonald:** I understand that all inquiries and complaints are allocated a unique reference number. How many inquiries and complaints have you received since the project started?

**David Climie:** I will split the numbers up between the principal contract and the M9 junction 1A contract.

**Gordon MacDonald:** A total would be helpful.

**David Climie:** Certainly, but I can briefly give you a good breakdown. In relation to the principal contract there were 149 inquiries about work opportunities, 317 other inquiries and 79 complaints. Those are cumulative figures for August 2011 to February 2013.

Of the 79 complaints, 29 were connected with vibration and noise; eight were connected with flooding; nine were to do with heavy goods vehicles issues, such as the timing of their movement and their sheeting; one was to do with the project hotline; 19 were to do with traffic management, such as the condition of roads and speeding; and 13 were categorised as other issues. That is the total of 79.

For comparison, on the M9 junction 1A contract, we had a total of 218 inquiries, of which 52 were treated as complaints.

**Gordon MacDonald:** How do you determine what is an inquiry and what is a complaint? If someone comes along to say that their back garden is flooded and to ask when you will resolve that, is that a complaint or an inquiry?

**David Climie:** That would be a complaint.

**Gordon MacDonald:** You have had more than 500 inquiries and complaints in total relating to the project, but you say that, at a community forum where representatives from the community had the opportunity to raise a complaint, they felt no requirement to raise anything at all.

**David Climie:** That was one particular community forum, which Lawrence Shackman referred to. Under the terms of reference of the community forums, issues are to be raised seven days in advance. It is helpful to be notified so that we can prepare a proper response. At that particular community forum, we received nothing from any local community representative seven days in advance. As nothing had been submitted, it was felt that there was no need to have the item on the agenda.

**Lawrence Shackman:** That said, the action list had a lot of community issues anyway, which were discussed at that meeting. It was not as though we did not discuss any community issues. There was also any other business at the end of the meeting, when issues could have been raised, and I am sure that they were.

**Gordon MacDonald:** As you say that any complaints or inquiries about the project should be made seven days in advance of a meeting, would it not be helpful to issue your presentations, papers and updates to community council and BRIGS representatives seven days in advance? You could then have more meaningful questions and discussions about that information. That could free some time so that complaints that had come to the fore in the few days before the meeting could be discussed as well—we should bear it in mind that you have the meetings only every three months.

**Lawrence Shackman:** One problem with that relates to the fact that we have tried to use graphical means to explain where we are with the project. We use aerial photographs, in particular, so that people can see clearly from above what progress has been made. Through graphical means, we can point out to people the points between which there will be a piece of traffic management in the succeeding three months, or the location of a water mains diversion.

To provide that in advance of the meeting would be extremely difficult. I am not saying that we could not provide some kind of three-month look ahead to the public, but I doubt that that would be as easy to understand as the graphical presentation, which we have slimmed down a lot. You must bear it in mind that the three contracts have been running simultaneously, so there has been a lot of information to give the public at each meeting. Another part of the terms of reference was that all the contractors for all three contracts had to come to all three forums. That was another burden on their time.

I would like to make one other point. The fundamental point about contacts with and inquiries to the project, which we have tried to instil in people at the community forum meetings, is that people should raise any day-to-day issues with us directly through our email contact address or our dedicated 24-hour helpline. I get the impression that people do not seem to want to use that facility, which is free. I am not saying that no one is aware of it—a lot of people in the communities are aware of it—but people tend to use the community forum as the focus whereas, if there is an issue, we would be much happier finding out about it there and then and dealing with it, whether through the contractor or directly, at the earliest opportunity.

**Gordon MacDonald:** BRIGS has highlighted several instances in which Transport Scotland has failed to adequately respond to issues that have been raised at the community forum. Will you look into those concerns and offer an assurance that such situations will not arise in the future?

**David Climie:** Yes, I think that we can do that. We will look at that. All the meetings are minuted and action item lists are produced. I will take action to review those to ensure that we have followed up on all the actions that we should have followed up on.

**Gordon MacDonald:** Thank you.

**The Convener:** Is it the case that people have phoned up the office and felt that they have not had their issue dealt with adequately, so they have taken it to the community forum? That now seems to be the route that people follow. I think that people should phone you directly—for one thing, that would be quicker than waiting for up to three months to get their issue resolved through the community forum—but I can understand why, if someone has phoned you and has not had their issue resolved, they would take it to the community forum. Has that problem existed in the past?

**David Climie:** I do not believe so. We monitor the situation. I mentioned the number of inquiries and complaints that we have had; we also monitor

how long it takes to respond to all those inquiries and complaints. A large majority are responded to within five days. It is very unusual for it to take longer than that. If it did take longer than that, we would have a look at that.

The community forum is only one aspect of the community reach-out that we do. I mentioned the stakeholder meetings that we had in January. We notify residents by letter about specific areas of work that are to take place. For example, we met the Linn Mill residents association, because it had a couple of questions about the marine work close to the south shore. We set up a meeting with that association, outwith the regular set-up of meetings, specifically to talk about those concerns. We also meet the Port Edgar Yacht Club regularly, particularly at the start of the spring sailing season, so that we can talk through with its members what we will be doing, where the restricted areas are and the specific concerns that the club has, to ensure that those concerns are being addressed. It is far more appropriate to deal with those directly in a separate environment, instead of having a catch-all set-up in the community forum.

**The Convener:** I listened to a moving radio piece about you inviting the people who were involved in the construction of the existing Forth road bridge to the construction site of the new bridge. I hope that most of them will still be here to see the new bridge completed and that they will be able to pay a return visit.

The committee heard concerns that work to the north of the crossing could create tailbacks on the current bridge and as far as the M9 spur. Do you share those concerns? If so, what are you doing to minimise the risk of that occurring?

10:45

**David Climie:** That relates to the work on the Ferrytoll roundabout, which I mentioned slightly in my opening statement. We are expending a lot of effort on phasing that work to reduce its impact on the main A90, because that is the main concern in terms of tailbacks and so on.

The work on the local roads is progressing and was due to be complete this year. That will divert a couple of the small roads that currently go into the Ferrytoll roundabout away from it in advance of us doing the work on the main line. We will give a detailed presentation to the local communities about how that work will be phased and what the various phases of traffic management are.

One of the fundamental requirements is that we maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction on the A90 throughout the duration of those works. That means that we will construct an extra, temporary road surfacing on to which we will be

able to divert traffic during the works. We expect that the work on the main line at Ferrytoll will not start until at least 2014—probably towards the middle of the year—and, in advance of that, we will do a lot of pre-planning and co-ordination with the community to ensure that we can keep traffic flowing through that area as smoothly as possible.

Of course, even with the two lanes and the 40mph average-speed cameras in place to keep the speeds down, we are concerned about there being an incident in the traffic management area. We will have our 24-hour free recovery service to ensure that any impact that is created is dealt with as quickly as possible. We are certainly conscious of the concerns that you raise and we are working to minimise them.

**The Convener:** My next question is not specifically to do with the Forth crossing, but it is for Transport Scotland. Have the intelligent transport systems given you any idea of how variable speeds can help with carbon reductions? I ask that because we are considering the Government's second report on proposals and policies for meeting Scotland's emissions reduction targets.

**Lawrence Shackman:** I cannot give you a numeric answer, but work to determine the impact on carbon reduction is on-going. We can see that the systems that have been put in place in Fife and at junction 1A, which operate for an hour or so most mornings, are helping to smooth the traffic flow so that we do not get stop-start movements. That is obviously having an impact on carbon emissions and is improving road safety.

**The Convener:** And that could be measurable.

**Lawrence Shackman:** It could be measurable.

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** The update that you provided for the committee indicated that there was a meeting last Thursday that involved Transport Scotland, the south east of Scotland transport partnership and local authorities. Was improving the provision for buses at the Newbridge junction raised at that meeting? If it was, were any commitments or decisions made?

**Lawrence Shackman:** Neither of us was at that meeting—colleagues in Transport Scotland attended it. I believe that the meeting was constructive and that there will be a follow-up meeting in the next month or so. It was agreed that more research would be done into how easy it would be to install bus lanes on the approaches to the Newbridge junction.

As was mentioned at a previous committee meeting, improving provision through and around that junction is the focus of the public transport strategy. There is a lot more work to be done

before we get to a stage at which commitments can be made to carry out the improvement works. We need to do some homework first—I think that that was the message of that meeting.

**Elaine Murray:** In your briefing, you indicate that there has been progress on the public transport strategy objectives. Would you like to add anything further to that?

**Lawrence Shackman:** The public transport strategy was refreshed last August. We had a meeting in November to review it, and that was when the focus on Newbridge emerged and it was decided to have a separate meeting on it, which we have just discussed.

The next public transport working group meeting is in May. It will consider the Newbridge area and some of the other possible interventions. The public transport strategy included the bus hard-shoulder running schemes that are now operational on the M90 in Fife and at junction 1A. The Halbeath park-and-ride facility is under construction and will be completed towards the end of this year. Various strands of the public transport strategy are taking shape.

**Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP):** According to media reports, a number of contractors involved in the project have been involved in employee blacklisting. What discussions have you had with those contractors on that issue?

**David Climie:** In the response to a written parliamentary question seeking information on what organisations that had been awarded contracts by Transport Scotland or the Scottish Government were members of the association that had the blacklist, Morrison Construction and FCBC were named; however, FCBC was named only because Morrison Construction is a constituent member of it. The Consulting Association, which ran the blacklist, closed down in 2009—in other words, before FCBC was formed—and the link with the association and the blacklisting issue emerged only because Morrison Construction had been a member of the association and is now a part of FCBC. That is how FCBC came to be connected with the issue.

That aside, I have to say that the Scottish Government is totally against the blacklist, and we have raised the matter with FCBC to make it clear that there is absolutely no question of blacklisting taking place. Our use of the public contracts Scotland website and the fact that we advertise all the job opportunities in local jobcentres should ensure that that does not happen.

**Adam Ingram:** Will you put on record a cast-iron assurance that the project has not been and will not be affected by employee blacklisting?

**David Climie:** I can assure you that, as far as I am aware, there is no issue related to blacklisting on the project. When we questioned FCBC on the matter, it assured us that that was the case.

**Adam Ingram:** Will you also assure us that you will keep a watching brief on and monitor the situation and that this will not be just a one-off inquiry of FCBC?

**David Climie:** Absolutely. We will continue to monitor the issue throughout the project.

**The Convener:** On the issue of manpower, how many people are employed on the project? More specifically, how many vocational training places are there? I understand that the figure has fallen a bit short of the 45 that should have been filled.

**David Climie:** The most recent workforce update that I can give you is that we reached our initial peak of about 1,200 on the site at the end of October. However, the figure has dropped somewhat with the completion of the Fife ITS, M9 junction 1A and the contact and education centre contracts, and it now stands at between 700 and 800. It will ramp up again to about 1,200 over the next few months as we begin the work on the towers and the approach viaduct, and we expect to reach that number later this year. We always expected fluctuations as the job progressed.

On your second question, as of 31 January this year, we have delivered 46 vocational training positions, 44 professional body training places and 70 positions for the long-term unemployed, all of which are ahead of our targets. We always thought that it might take a little time to reach what are quite stretching targets, but we are happy to have reached them and we will continue to push the contractor very hard to ensure that it continues to achieve and beat them.

**Jim Eadie:** Your statement that the air quality monitoring equipment had been installed was a helpful reassurance and, if the concerns that have been expressed by BRIGS and the local community have been listened to and acted on, that is very welcome. However, it would also help the committee if you could clarify when the equipment was installed.

I have a question about the on-going commitment beyond the construction phase of the crossing. Given the reference in BRIGS's written evidence to the daily prospect of 93,000 vehicles passing in close proximity to the Echline corner and in very close proximity to residents' properties, do you see an on-going requirement for air quality monitoring and, if so, who would be responsible for that?

**Lawrence Shackman:** We would certainly look at the scheme's benefits in our before-and-after study. All the data that is being gathered through

construction concerns the construction itself but, post-construction, we will be able to assess noise and air quality impacts by monitoring the traffic flows on the bridge in the years to come.

We have sophisticated computer programs that can simulate noise data, supplemented by actual readings at strategic points. Predicted traffic flows were used to put together the environmental statement in the first place. When the bridge comes into operation, we can use actual flows that we will monitor with a whole host of traffic recording devices on the road layout up and down the scheme.

In the Echline section of the scheme, the main carriageway will be in a deep cutting and, as the traffic will be as much as 7m to 9m below the new Queensferry junction, noise and air pollution will be minimised. As people come out of that cutting and head northwards towards the bridge, they will see earth bunds and noise barriers right up to the bridge; the windshields over the approach viaduct will double as noise barriers at that point. The measures in the final scheme to mitigate the impact of noise, in particular, are considerable.

**Jim Eadie:** But you will consider the requirement for on-going monitoring.

**Lawrence Shackman:** Absolutely.

**The Convener:** Finally, how much has been spent on the construction of the bridge in the past financial year?

**David Climie:** We expect total expenditure in financial year 2012-13, which is just about to finish, to be £242 million.

**The Convener:** As members have no more questions, I thank the witnesses for their evidence. We will continue to monitor the community issues and we hope that things will have improved when you come to see us again in six months' time. That ends our evidence taking.

10:58

*Meeting continued in private until 11:12.*





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