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Western Link Road changes and costs to go to committee

Councillors serving on Moray Council's Economic Development and Infrastructure committee will be advised of design changes to the Elgin Western Link Road project and the increase in cost.

The [planning application](#) for the link road was refused last November, but in December the council subsequently re-affirmed its commitment to the project and instructed that a redesigned road to provide a new crossing over the Elgin railway line be drawn up to address the reasons for refusal.

Last week these design changes were met with general approval by objectors that attended a previous workshop on the issues, although some maintained their opposition to the project in principle.

Cost increases totalling £2.6 million are detailed in a [report](#) on the project, which cites delays, inflation in construction costs, property acquisition and design changes as the main causes.

The estimate reported to the council in March 2013 was £10m, which was reduced by £1million when the access road for the new High School was removed from the overall project to allow that work to start without delay. The new cost is estimated at £11.810m, with £3.54m already spent.

If agreed by the Economic Development and Infrastructure committee on Tuesday (20th), the report will be submitted to the next meeting of the full council on November 11 when councillors will be asked to approve the extra costs and the preparation of a new planning application incorporating the changes in the redesign.

The changes to the design includes the following:

- Extending the 30 mph speed limit on the A96 150m west of the new junction.
- Removing traffic islands to reduce cycling hazards.
- Reduce the road width generally to 6m to slow traffic.
- Remove the centre line marking and minimise other road markings where possible.
- Provide a footway on the east side of the whole route in addition to a cycleway on the west side.
- Minimise the road signs to reduce clutter.
- Better facilities at junctions for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Realignment of the road south of the railway to manage traffic speeds better.
- Additional pedestrian and cycle junctions and crossings.
- Improved access to the wetlands.
- Bus stops moved to on-carriageway and shelters provided in exposed locations.

A chronology of the project is [here](#)

Moray Council area stretches from Tomintoul in the south to the shores of the Moray Firth, from Keith in the east to Forres in the west. The council and its 4,500 employees respond to the needs of 92,500 residents in this beautiful part of Scotland, which nestles between Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

Famous for its colony of dolphins, fabulous beaches and more malt whisky distilleries than any where else in Scotland, Moray is a thriving area and a great place to live.

Headquartered in Elgin, the administrative capital of Moray.

Contacts



Sharon Dunbar

Press Contact

Media and Communications Officer

sharon.dunbar@moray.gov.uk

01343 563046

07967 748826



Peter Jones

Press Contact

Communications manager

Press, public communications, social media, events, FOI, campaigns, crisis comms.

peter.jones@moray.gov.uk

01343 563601

07974 191318