

A96 bypasses would bring £107 million per year benefits to region

Bypasses at Elgin, Nairn and Keith on the A96 would boost the regional economy by around £107 million each year and cut up to 30 minutes from local and long distance journeys, according to a new research study. There would also be more than 6,600 long term jobs created in the wider economy as well as 1,700 during the construction of the bypasses.

The independent research was commissioned by HITRANS, the regional transport partnership of the Highlands and Islands, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise following on from earlier work on the Aberdeen to Inverness transport corridor. Its purpose was to identify the economic benefits of bypassing the three communities.

HITRANS Chair, Duncan MacIntyre, outlined the findings from the report, saying:

“The A96 is a major arterial route for the north of Scotland, but it can be a great hindrance to people trying to do business. The provision of bypasses at these three main towns on the route would make journey times much faster for local and longer distance travellers, while providing real benefits to those living in the communities by making them better places to live and work.

“The report clearly makes the case for bypasses and we would urge the Government and Transport Scotland to include them as priorities for the near future in the Strategic Transport Projects Review.”

The A96 cuts through Nairn, Elgin and Keith and traffic speeds can be as low as 10mph in Elgin. The heavy traffic flow through the towns cuts the communities in half and creates major problems for local drivers and pedestrians.

The construction of bypasses would potentially release much needed land for development in the towns and could generate around £38 million from developers to help fund the road improvements. The reduction in congestion would also lead to savings of over £21 million each year for users of the A96 as a result of shorter journey times.

Another report for HITRANS on the A9, which considers the relative benefits of dualling different sections, has recommended that the Kingussie to Aviemore stretch of road is given priority. The study showed that dualling this particular section alone would bring overall economic benefits of almost £400 million over a 60 year period

Ends

Issued by Platform PR on behalf of HITRANS by Platform PR. For more information please contact Jane Cumming or Jenny MacPherson on 01463 783018 or 07900 917142.