

Queensferry & District Community Council approve Forth Replacement Crossing

Queensferry & District Community Council (QDCC) this month gave a cautious welcome to the Forth Crossing Bill Committee's Stage 2 report on the plans for the Forth Replacement Crossing, despite the remaining objections having been dismissed.

The report follows a series of hearings at the Scottish Parliament in front of an independent Assessor, Professor Hugh Begg, who heard supporting evidence from objectors including the community council.

In his report to the Committee, Professor Begg recommended the outstanding objections be dismissed.

Martin Gallagher, Convener of the community council's Forth Replacement Crossing sub-committee said: "While we are disappointed that the Committee has dismissed our remaining objections, it has not come as a particular surprise as the odds have been stacked against us from the start."

"We had to work to very tight timescales and some of the amendments we sought would have required another objection period, with the consequence that the Bill would not be completed in the current Parliamentary session. Lessons have to be learned from this experience and QDCC will be giving feedback to the Parliamentary clerks on how the Hybrid Bill process itself can be improved."

Despite remaining objections having been dismissed, including the lack of a direct link to the M9, the Stage 2 process has seen several changes made to the plans as a result of QDCC's objections.

Mr Gallagher added: "As a result of the ongoing dialogue with Transport Scotland throughout the year, many issues were able to be resolved before the Committee's report: The design of M9 junction 1a has been improved; Ferrymuir roundabout will be retained; pedestrian links have been enhanced and the Code of Construction Practice has been significantly strengthened. I am pleased the Committee has recognised the efforts of objectors in securing modest concessions from Transport Scotland which were hard fought for."

The Committee will now consider any final amendments before Parliament votes on the Bill in December. If passed, construction is expected to commence in July next year.

The Forth Replacement Crossing is the name given to the planned new bridge over the River Forth near South Queensferry, which will take some of the traffic away from The Forth Road Bridge which was opened in 1964.