

Forth Replacement Crossing given legal go-ahead

✘ Legal authority to build the Forth Replacement Crossing (FRC) has been given following Royal Assent for the necessary legislation to build the scheme.

Royal Assent will see the Forth Crossing Bill, approved by the Scottish Parliament on 15 December, come into force as the Forth Crossing Act and officially grant Scottish Ministers the powers to begin construction of the project later this year.

The final invitation to tender for the principal FRC contract was issued before Christmas, marking the end of a year-long competitive dialogue process between Transport Scotland and the two consortia bidding for the principal FRC contract: Forthspan and Forth Crossing Bridge Constructors (FCBC).

Both consortia are now preparing their final tenders before submitting them at the end of January. The contract is expected to be worth between £0.9 billion and £1.2 billion (excluding VAT and at 2011 prices) and is due to be awarded in April this year.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth John Swinney said:

“While this Government’s efforts have been rightly focused on keeping Scotland moving during the severe winter weather, this sustained progress in delivering the Forth Replacement Crossing further underlines there is no let up in our programme of investment in Scotland’s economy.

“Royal Assent for the Forth Crossing Bill marks a historic step forward for this absolutely essential project. The project is on time and within budget and this is a testament to the hard work of all concerned with progressing parallel

Parliamentary and procurement processes. The Scottish Government has committed to ensuring the FRC is completed by 2016 and we are on track to award the main contract for the project by April 2011.

“This news, alongside last month’s announcements of the opening of the Airdrie-Bathgate line and confirmation for the upgrading of the M8 and the central Scotland motorway network, demonstrate the real progress being made by the Scottish Government in investing billions in Scotland’s sustainable economic growth.”

There are however many living in the immediate area where the Forth Replacement Crossing will be built who do not agree with the need for a new bridge. Forthright Alliance is one group who opposes the construction.