

Forth Replacement Crossing – do you have a better name?

Transport Minister Keith Brown has asked officials building the Forth Replacement Crossing project to begin the process for choosing a permanent name for the new Bridge.

The news comes in the week that Transport Scotland officials are also preparing to submit a planning application for the FRC Contact and Education Centre which will see this important community engagement hub during construction combined with a new permanent national Traffic Control Centre.

Mr Brown outlined how the new Contact and Education Centre could play a part in allowing the public a key role in choosing the name for the new bridge:

He said:

“This government recognises that finding an appropriate name for the new bridge is a matter of considerable interest both locally and nationally. While we should remember that the Forth Replacement Crossing is the name of the project to deliver the bridge, not the name of the completed bridge, I would like to have an open and transparent process for deciding the name that allows all of Scotland to be involved.

“I have asked my officials to look at how to best coordinate a process for naming the new bridge in which the public can fully participate and the Contact and Education Centre will be a key channel for delivering this.

“Details of this process are likely to be announced during 2012 to allow a name to be chosen in time for the expected opening of the new bridge in 2016.”

The Contact and Education Centre facility will act as a

central point for public information and consultation during the FRC construction process, in line with the requirements of the project's Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), as well as providing space for a visitor exhibition on the project and conducting educational activities around the construction.

In addition, the planned building would also provide a new permanent home for Traffic Scotland's National Control Centre that will monitor the operation of Scotland's road network including acting as a coordinating hub during emergencies, disruption and periods of severe weather.

Mr Brown added:

"The construction of the FRC project will clearly be hugely significant for local communities and, as Scotland's largest infrastructure development for a generation, will also attract considerable national and international attention.

"Proactive public consultation, engagement and the sharing of information has been central to the FRC project's development to date and we are committed to providing a Contact and Education Centre that offers the public a dedicated facility for information, education and consultation purposes during construction.

"This facility will be an important place for people to get up to date information about the project and speak directly to representatives from Transport Scotland's FRC team and its contractors.

"I am pleased that we have been able to develop joined-up plans for this Centre in conjunction with a dedicated National Traffic Control Centre that will deliver greater efficiency and value for the public purse."

The proposals will see a purpose built, 1200 m² dual-use facility developed on land adjacent to the Forth Road Bridge administration office at South Queensferry at an estimated

cost of around £3.8 million. Land for the development is being provided by the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA), who operate and maintain the existing bridge.

Transport Scotland officials have been working worked closely with FETA, the authority that maintains and operates the existing Forth Road Bridge, in developing the proposals for the Contact and Education Centre.

Phil Wheeler, FETA Convener, said: "It has been a long-held ambition of the bridge authority to see a high quality visitor facility established for the Forth bridges. The new bridge will be of huge interest during construction and, once complete, we will have a unique visitor attraction in three major bridges from three consecutive centuries.

"The Contact and Education Centre will play a central role in engaging and educating the public, as well as bringing jobs to the local area. That's why we're giving it our full support and making all the necessary land and access available."

Local representatives have also supported the proposals and welcomed being consulted before plans were finalised.

Martin Gallagher of Queensferry & District Community Council (QDCC) said: "QDCC are pleased to have had the opportunity to comment on the Contact & Education Centre proposals prior to the planning application being submitted and we recognise the efforts of Transport Scotland to meet the community's aspirations for a high quality, landmark building for the site. The integration of the Traffic Scotland national control centre will help ensure a long-term role for the building, bringing a legacy potential after the bridge construction activities are complete, such as a Forth Bridges visitor centre."

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