Dear Convener

FORTH REPLACEMENT CROSSING – FURTHER INFORMATION

Following the evidence session to the ICI Committee on Wednesday 18 February 2015, to provide an update of the Forth Replacement Crossing (FRC) project, I undertook to provide further information to the Committee on Trans-European Transport (Ten-T) funding and outline some of the engineering firsts on the FRC project.

Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)

As I stated at Committee, the Project has previously made applications for funding under the TEN-T funding scheme but has been unsuccessful on three occasions.

TEN-T regulations, updated in December 2013, set out the key transport networks which will serve the EU through to 2050, and standards and obligations to help deliver these. The regulations set out a dual layer network: Comprehensive and Core. The Comprehensive network consists of all main routes and connections for road, rail, airports and ports, and includes the A90/M90. The Core network contains the routes of most strategic importance and brings together routes, nodes and hubs for transport flows within the internal market and between the EU and its neighbours. The A90 is not part of the core network.

At present the TEN-T programme, funded from the EU budget, finances infrastructure projects and studies for roads, railways, inland waterways, airports, ports, satellite navigation and traffic management systems lying on the designated network. The Commission have made it clear that their funding priority is rail and low carbon transport.

We are continuing to explore European funding opportunities aimed at improving Scotland’s transport networks.
Engineering firsts on the FRC project

The FRC project will experience a number of engineering firsts that can be celebrated; some of these are listed below:

- The Forth Replacement Crossing (FRC) project is the biggest transport infrastructure project in Scotland for a generation.

- The Queensferry Crossing will be 1.7 miles (2.7 km) in length making it the longest three tower cable-stayed bridge in the world.

- The Crossing will be the largest cable stay bridge to feature cables which cross mid-span. This innovative design provides extra strength and stiffness, allowing the towers and the deck to be more slender and elegant.

- The crossing will have the longest spans of any balanced cantilever bridge in the world.

- The centre tower, standing at 210 metres, will be the tallest bridge tower in the UK.

- The centre tower will be the highest freestanding structure in Scotland.

- The underwater concrete pour on the south tower foundations set a new world record. A 15 day, 24 hour non-stop operation in August/September 2013 successfully poured 16,869 cubic metres of concrete. This was the largest ever continuous underwater concrete pour.

- When complete, the new Ferrytoll embankment will be one of the highest man made motorway embankments in the UK, 200m long and up to 25m high.

- The Intelligent Transport System is the first such system deployed in Scotland. When complete it will extend over a 22km length from Halbeath on the M90 to Newbridge on the M9, providing mandatory variable speed control and state of the art electronic messaging.

- All major roads within the project are utilising the first widescale application of a new, highly durable surfacing known as TS 2010. This surfacing material is designed to be highly resilient and longer lasting than traditional road surfacing.

We will continue to keep the Committee updated on the progress of the FRC project in our regular written updates.

Yours sincerely

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Project Director/Employer’s Representative