Transition Black Isle

Registered address

c/o Stoneybank Culbokie Dingwall IV7 8JH

15 June 2023

Craig Baxter and Lizbeth Collie

Active Travel Team

Highland Council

Glenurquhart Road

INVERNESS, IV3 5NX

Craig Baxter - Sustainable Transport Team Leader

Lizbeth Collie - Active Travel Engagement Officer

Dear Craig and Lizbeth,

AVOCH TO MUNLOCHY TO DRUMDERFIT ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE

The Trustees of Transition Black Isle met last week and discussed in detail the outcome of the most recent meeting between Highland Council (THC), Sustrans and Transition Black Isle (TBI).

TBI thank you for your wish to continue promoting this legacy Active Travel Route first initiated in 2014 by our community group, and taken up again in 2019. We are pleased that THC wish to make cycling safer on the busy A832 across the Black Isle and give prominence to this route irrespective of its notional ARUP ranking. TBI are pleased that the legacy route through Culbokie on the Black Isle is also being progressed.

TBI accepts the offer of THC to take on the lead role to progress the PfE process towards full delivery, recognising that The Council will develop the route design prepared by Pell Frischmann from a start point at the Primary School turn off in Avoch to the National Cycle Network 1 turn off to the south of Munlochy.

TBI requests that THC submit the necessary information to Sustrans to complete the change request via TBI’s current project on the Sustrans Portal.

The change request should include the following details:

• Detailed programme/budget breakdown for completing Stage 2 (to be provided by THC)

• High-level budget breakdown for Stages 3-7 (to be provided by THC)

• Justification for change, etc. (per the usual change control form questions)

• Any geographic changes, i.e., route extent

• Short MOU between THC/TBI re: communications, including how the TBI Working Group will be consulted and the community will be kept updated, bearing in mind much work has already been done on the detailed design nearly to the completion of Stage 2 and that much of this has drawn on local knowledge.

TBI is aware of correspondence between Sustrans and THC which outlines the expectations of Sustrans for developing the route in the future and TBI hopes that progress will be made.

TBI requests a formal process for THC to update TBI on progress, no less than two-monthly. This is to ensure active participation by TBI where appropriate, such as in community consultation activity. TBI requests access to further documentation as it materialises. TBI would like clarity on the extent of the partnership between TBI and the land managers.

TBI is very disappointed that the section between the NCN turn off in Munlochy and Drumderfit is being excluded. TBI requests that THC find some quick fixes to ensure better safety for all users of this section of road as a matter of priority, as this section was always the most dangerous such as extension of reduced speed restriction area past the Monument and to include Knockbain Rd. TBI and The Association of Northern Trails Scotland (for the John o’ Groats Trail) will seek to develop this important connection via alternative channels.

Finally, TBI reiterates the disappointment expressed in our recent meeting that the briefing note issued by THC to a wide range of stakeholders did not reflect the detailed and extensive consultation with stakeholders, including relevant landowners and tenants. TBI was also disappointed that THC had not provided TBI with a meeting or call before the note was issued. This would have enabled THC to explain why the note was being framed in the way that it was, which would likely have avoided some of the concern and upset caused to the group that has been attempting to progress this project for at least 10 years.

TBI looks forward with enthusiasm to the development of the route.

Julian Paren

Convenor, Transition Black Isle

Please reply to Julian Paren, e-mail to julian.paren@gmail.com or by post to Marowan, Munlochy, IV8 8PF