



JAM74
briefing
paper

A route to prosperity?

the M74 Northern Extension
and economic development

Sweeping claims have been made about the economic benefits to the West of Scotland of the promised M74 Northern Extension

yet these have never been proven.

The road is being promoted as a £177 million investment in jobs

yet government research shows new roads can just as easily suck money out as in.

It is Scotland's largest proposed road project

yet the alternatives have never been properly evaluated.

Although promoted by business groups and given planning permission by local councils, the proposal has not been accepted by the Scottish Office, no one has agreed to pay for it, and there are many stages of land purchase, public inquiry and legal challenge still to be gone through. **Now is the time to stop the scheme.**

This briefing paper exposes the flaws in the economic case for the M74 Northern Extension and highlights the benefits of practical and sustainable alternatives.

the **impact** of the M74 Northern Extension. *The scheme would:*

- cost **£177 million**, for five miles of 6 to 8 lane motorway from Carmyle to Kingston
 - lead to the **demolition** of 2 churches, 41 homes and 99 business premises
 - increase **traffic noise** disturbance for 668 properties and decrease it for just 89
 - be over 40 feet high and more than **100 feet wide** at Eglinton Toll
 - save motorists **just 9.6 minutes** in peak traffic and 5.8 minutes in off-peak traffic
 - almost certainly require **Private Finance Initiative** funding

Jobs at risk?

Q. Scottish Enterprise have surveyed hundreds of firms in the area and concluded that thousands of jobs would be lost if the M74 Northern Extension did not proceed. Surely that's the market pointing the right route forward?

A. Scottish Enterprise have refused to publish details of their study, so it's impossible to test the validity of their approach. If the study offered companies a simplistic choice between "do nothing" and building the M74 - with no mention of the practical transport alternatives - it's little wonder that the preference would be for building the road. If you're asked if you'd like something for nothing - it's assumed this £177 million road would be paid for by Glasgow and South Lanarkshire Council taxpayers as a whole - it's pretty tempting to say yes!

A route to new industry?

Q. Motorways have had an enormous impact on the pattern of industrial development. Look at the new manufacturing and distribution firms along the M74 and M8 in Lanarkshire - weren't they attracted by good transport?

A. A 1995 survey for Strathclyde Region found that 83% of firms along the proposed route of the M74 Northern Extension thought that the existing local road network was "very good", "good" or "adequate".

In practice, factors other than transport are very influential in attracting new firms. Government grants, low-priced land, skilled labour, good schools, shopping and leisure facilities, low crime levels and an attractive environment - access to all these is crucial and they vary enormously from one location to another.

The relatively marginal impact of road infrastructure is illustrated by the case of Ayrshire, which contributes over 14% of Scotland's exports with just 7% of the country's population - all from a region with no dual carriageway or motorway links to the rest of Britain.

What do the experts say about roads and economic development?

"While in certain circumstances transport schemes may bring added economic benefits to an area needing regeneration, in other circumstances the opposite might occur. Better communications will enlarge markets for goods, services and workers: the area as a whole may gain or lose from this depending on the structure and competitiveness of the local economy. It follows that there is no simple unambiguous link between transport provision and local regeneration."
House of Commons Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment ('SACTRA'), 1998

What does the Government think?

Q. The scheme is supported by Glasgow City and South Lanarkshire Councils, which are both Labour-led. So surely the proposal can't be out of step with current Government thinking?

A. It is. Government guidance on the issue is very clear:

"We want to see new roads built only where it makes sense to do so: that is, after a thorough appraisal of the costs and benefits associated with any proposed scheme and any possible alternative modes which might serve the same route."

Donald Dewar, Scottish Transport White Paper, 1998

"Before including major new [road] schemes in their strategy, local authorities should be able to demonstrate that they have looked at alternative or complementary solutions such as public transport improvements and traffic management measures, and that the road scheme is consistent with an integrated transport strategy."

Scottish Office Preliminary Guidance on Local Transport Strategies, 1999

the Alternatives

No-car lanes on the M8

Peak-hour congestion on the Kingston Bridge, which delays commuter buses and lorries carrying exports from Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire, is primarily caused by cars. The most obvious early solution to congestion on the M8 - particularly as the M74 Northern Extension could not be completed for at least 7 years - is to introduce no-car lanes.

New cross-Glasgow rail services

At present there are no through rail services from Edinburgh or Lanarkshire to Renfrewshire, Inverclyde or Ayrshire - one of the key traffic flows that the motorway would carry. Yet such rail services could be provided without the need for any new rail infrastructure.

Rail electrification

The electrification of the direct Glasgow Central-Shotts-Edinburgh route would further transform the speed and quality of train links from the west of Scotland to the east.

Glasgow Airport rail link

Glasgow Airport is the largest in Britain (and one of the largest in Europe) without a passenger rail link. Passenger trains direct from Edinburgh, Lanarkshire and Glasgow would remove one of the main arguments for the new motorway.

The rail freight bypass

The national rail freight operators have been investigating the scope for feeder rail services from Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire to the Scottish freight railheads at Coatbridge and Mossend - allowing export containers to bypass completely the Kingston Bridge and M8 congestion, and bringing environmental benefits to Glasgow and Lanarkshire.

time for some answers

We believe no elected representative should support the scheme until they have received good answers to some key questions:

- When will the Scottish Enterprise study (claiming thousands of job losses if the M74 Northern Extension isn't built) be exposed to public scrutiny?
- If road construction is to be PFI-funded, for how many years will Glasgow and South Lanarkshire Council taxpayers have to foot an annual bill, and how much will it be?
- Why has no attempt been made to look at no-car lanes on the M8, when there is virtually no prospect of a new road being opened for at least 7 years?
- What is the reason for the councils' failure to evaluate other components of an alternative transport package, such as through rail passenger services across Glasgow and the development of feeder rail freight services bypassing the Kingston Bridge and the M8?
- Isn't it only fair and sensible to undertake a 'corridor appraisal' of the alternatives and the proposed road, so that the most cost-effective solution can be identified through objective analysis?
- How does the outdated concept of an 8-lane elevated motorway, generating yet more traffic, fit with the Scottish Office's new guidance to local authorities on Local Transport Strategies?
- At a time when great world cities like Boston and San Francisco are dismantling urban motorways and replacing them with advanced light rail and bus priority schemes, why should Glasgow (City of Architecture and Design 1999) be saddled with a 1960s solution to 21st century transport problems?

Joint Action against the M74

is a coalition of community, environmental and sustainable transport groups. Member organisations of JAM74 include:

Terrace Community Council
Pollokshields Community Council
Residents Against the M74
Friends of the Earth Glasgow
Go Bike! Strathclyde Cycle Campaign
Scottish Association for Public Transport
TRANSform Scotland

objectives of JAM74

Oppose construction of the proposed M74 Northern Extension Phase 2 ("the Scheme") and to have the Scheme omitted from the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Structure Plan.

Persuade the Scottish Office to carry out a comprehensive appraisal of the Scheme, properly examining sustainable transport alternatives to the motorway option.

Develop our own alternative package of economically and environmentally sustainable transport solutions for the area of the Scheme.

Encourage restoration of all open spaces and buildings blighted by the Scheme to full use as sources of employment or community resources

Press for effective remediation of all contaminated land in the area of the Scheme.



For more information about JAM74 or any of the issues raised here, contact:
Donald Matheson, JAM74, PO Box 3751, Glasgow, G42 8WR
e-mail: donald.matheson@strath.ac.uk
web: www.strath.ac.uk/Students/Environment/JAM74.htm

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