

## SUBMISSION FROM MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

Midlothian Council notes and welcomes the laying before Parliament on 12 December 2008 of the NPF2 Proposed Framework and the request for responses from interested parties to be submitted by Monday 12 January 2009. Given the short timescale for such responses, the Cabinet Spokesperson for Strategic Services has agreed that the following comments be submitted on behalf of Midlothian Council:

1. The Council has consistently welcomed the preparation of NPF2 as a positive addition to the statutory development plan process and the engagement of Scottish Government directly in plan preparation. The importance of NPF2 in establishing the national context for the long-term development of Scotland's economy, environment and communities as well as its transport and physical infrastructure networks should not be underestimated. The views expressed in this submission are offered with this in mind.
2. Firstly, this Council welcomes the support provided by NPF2 for the **Borders Rail Line** project. Whilst not identified as a national development, the Framework nevertheless gives clear commitment to the implementation of this strategic transport infrastructure project in the period to 2012. An early start on this project is essential to address the significant development pressures over the next 25 years in this part of Scotland, as acknowledged in the Framework (paras. 109-110).
3. Secondly, however, the Council is concerned that there is no explicit reference within the Framework to the requirement for **grade separation of the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass at the Sheriffhall junction**. The Council asked for this project to be included in the list of national developments as it is considered critical to securing and managing future economic growth along this transport corridor and further afield. This is a key junction on the trunk road connecting the growth hubs at the west and south east of the Edinburgh city region and an essential link in promoting connectivity between East and Central Scotland and the national road network south to England. The only related reference in NPF2 is to "improvements to some of the key junctions on the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass" in relation to tackling congestion and reducing conflicts between strategic and local traffic (para. 132). The addition of this reference is a step in the right direction but this Council would have welcomed a more explicit recognition of the strategic significance of improving and maintaining this key intersection on the strategic road network.
4. The Council is particularly concerned to note that the *Analysis of Consultation Responses* (to the NPF2 Discussion Draft), published in December 2008 alongside the Proposed Framework, fails to acknowledge this Council's submission requesting the inclusion of Sheriffhall grade separation as a national development. At para. 5.24, this document lists the trunk road schemes for which respondents sought recognition in NPF2, and neither Sheriffhall junction nor the A720 City Bypass are included in this list. All suggestions for national development designation are listed in Appendix 3 of this document and this again fails to identify this Council's request for

consideration to be given to including the grade separation of Sheriffhall. Furthermore, this Council's support for the Borders Rail Line project to be identified as a national development is not included in that summary.

**In fact, scrutiny of the *Analysis of Consultation Responses* confirms that there is no reference at all to the submissions made by this Council and the Committee should now redress this situation and consider the requests made by this Council.** Further, the consultation responses document should be amended to acknowledge the support for these two projects clearly articulated by this Council within the Scottish Government's consultation period.

5. Finally, the Council is disappointed that the Framework does not contain a robust statement, and give clearer recognition to, the role of the capital city and the Edinburgh city region in continuing to deliver the future economic prosperity of Scotland as a whole. As it stands, NPF2 appears reluctant to provide the impetus and support required for a strong strategic vision for sustainable economic growth to underpin the forthcoming Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland. The Committee is asked to review the success or otherwise of the Framework in providing the foundations for this vision and practical support for its implementation.

I trust that the above comments will be presented to the Local Government and Communities Committee to inform its consideration of the Framework and preparation of its report to Parliament.

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Midlothian Council