Petition by James Reynolds on behalf of the Scotsman newspaper, calling for the Scottish Parliament to support the establishment of the golden eagle as the national bird of Scotland.
To the Scottish Parliament:

PETITION CALLING FOR THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT TO SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE (Aquila chrysaetos) AS THE NATIONAL BIRD OF SCOTLAND FOLLOWING A CAMPAIGN AND READER VOTE IN THE SCOTSMAN NEWSPAPER.

For all its stunning native and migratory birds, rich ornithological history, spectacular wildlife reserves and world leading efforts to preserve and reintroduce species, Scotland has never had a national bird.

Given the great affection in which birds are held in Scotland, their rich social and cultural associations and many historical links, it is strange that we do not have a national bird as one of our country's emblems to accompany the Lion Rampant, the Scottish Thistle and the Saltire.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) working in Scotland to protect and conserve the country's rich diversity of birds and other wildlife, and the precious habitats which serve to support them.

For three weeks in August The Scotsman ran a national campaign to get the public to vote from a list of 12 native Scottish birds, drawn up by experts at the RSPB. Each bird was "championed" by a television, film or radio personality, wildlife presenters, sports stars and some of your MSP colleagues.

The champions included: Annable Goldie MSP, Robin Harper MSP, Wendy Alexander MSP, Sophie Stafford (Editor of BBC Wildlife magazine), Fred MacAulay, Chris Paterson (captain of Scottish Rugby Union Team), Billy Boyd, Rab McNeil, Kirsty Wark, Stuart Housden, Simon King and Vanessa Collingridge.

Readers were able to vote via a dedicated telephone line number, mobile phone texts, email or letter for their choice from
the list of twelve birds.

The campaign received 1,666 votes in total. The outright winner was the golden eagle, with a total of 406 votes.

In view of the result, we, the undersigned, request that:

The Scottish Parliament takes steps to officially adopt the golden eagle as Scotland's National Bird, and as a new emblem of the country.

Name of petitioner: The Scotsman (James Reynolds, environment correspondent), 108 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AS. Telephone 0141 2366440, email: jreynolds@scotsman.com

Persons supporting the petition: Stuart Housden, Director, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Scotland), RSPB Scotland HQ, Dunedin House, 25 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 3TP. Tel 0131 3116500.
PETITION PE783

Thank you for your letter of 5 April relating to my petition, which calls for the golden eagle to be established as the national bird for Scotland. I now work for RSPB Scotland as a media officer, but the petition continues to be supported by The Scotsman and I enclose a letter to this effect from David Lee, Assistant Editor. I have read the Official Report and papers for your committee meeting on 18 January and offer the following comments, as requested.

The Scottish Executive background paper which outlines examples of national birds in other countries makes interesting reading, and I am heartened by the statistic that between 80 and 90 countries have some type of national bird. The other countries highlighted in the Executive paper, many of which have strong links to Scotland, and to which many Scots have emigrated, seem to be the clearest examples – the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

In addition to the results of The Scotsman’s competition to choose a national bird, the Scottish Executive’s Scottish Biodiversity List, published 15 December 2005, included a public survey of favourite Scottish species. The results of this showed that the golden eagle was the favourite bird amongst those surveyed. If this idea is to be pursued, these tests of public opinion may be deemed sufficient; or the Parliament may wish to conduct other forms of consultation.

Tom McCabe’s letter does not appear to dismiss the idea of Scotland establishing a national bird, and in fact he notes that “in many cases the choice in other countries has been made by the legislative arm of government.” This would suggest that it is up to the Committee to decide whether to refer the matter to the Scottish Parliament. My interpretation of this is that the Executive would not stand in the way of Parliament itself pursuing this issue and establishing a national bird.

I hope that the Committee takes this idea forward, with a recommendation to the full Parliament to establish, by some process, a National Bird for Scotland.
19 May 2006

Richard Hough
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Hough

I am writing to offer the support of The Scotsman to Petition 783, which calls for the golden eagle to become the official National Bird of Scotland. The Scotsman ran a competition over a period of three weeks in 2004 to determine which bird was the public’s favourite, and the golden eagle was the clear winner. The petition was submitted in the name of James Reynolds – but since he no longer works at The Scotsman, we felt it was appropriate to reiterate the newspaper’s support. The Scotsman firmly believes that national symbols engender a sense of pride in our nation and have positive spin-offs for tourism. As such, we believe that the golden eagle is a fitting symbol of our nation. The adoption of this magnificent species as our national bird would further cement its association with Scotland whilst also sending out a strong message on the nature of our country’s regard for its environment and our wild natural heritage.

Please get in touch if we can help any further.

DAVID LEE
Assistant Editor
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please complete the template below. Please refer to the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on issues of admissibility before completing the template. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

Details of principal petitioner:

Bill Cantley, Chair, ForthRight Alliance

The ForthRight Alliance is the campaign alliance against the construction of a Second Forth Road Bridge, its members include:


The ForthRight Alliance

Text of petition:

Petition by Bill Cantley, on behalf of the ForthRight Alliance, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to desist from spending taxpayers’ money on preparing for the construction of a Second Forth Road Bridge before having at its disposal all the facts regarding the condition of the existing Forth Road Bridge on the grounds that any such expenditure would be both environmentally irresponsible and fiscally imprudent.
Additional information:

Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition:

The ForthRight Alliance has approached the Scottish Executive regarding the relevant concern, and have received no response beyond a holding response.

Members of The ForthRight Alliance have also met with the Chair of the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA).

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee  X

I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

Signature of principal petitioner:

Signature Bill Cantley, Chair of The ForthRight Alliance

Date 27.01.2006

Please note that any additional information, copies of relevant correspondence and additional signatures should be appended to this form and submitted to:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186    Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
ForthRight Alliance -
Forth Road Bridge petition

Additional information

The ForthRight Alliance, the campaign alliance against the construction of a Second Forth Road Bridge, continues to review the discussions and proposals for a Second Forth Road Bridge from a position of critical interest. The Alliance takes the view that the Scottish Ministers should have all the facts at its disposal before taking a stance on the possibility of an additional bridge; failing to do so would be both environmentally irresponsible and fiscally imprudent.

It is our belief that all options to maintain and preserve the existing bridge (such as replacement cables and dehumidification), demand management (including a variable charging regime), and the delivery of sustainable transport alternatives must be fully explored before a further new bridge is actively pursued. Furthermore we seek assurances that the results of the Scottish Executive's audit of FETA's research on the current condition of the Forth Road Bridge will be released into the public domain as soon as this information is available.

The ForthRight Alliance has written to Scottish Executive Transport Minister Tavish Scott MSP requesting clarification of comments attributed to him in The Scotsman on 27th January 2006: "We will make a decision [on a new bridge] in principle by Easter." The ForthRight Alliance has requested on what basis the Minister would make such a decision upon and how does this fit with the Scottish Executive's official statements on the matter. The ForthRight Alliance has still to receive a substantive response from the Minister.

The ForthRight Alliance has, and will, continue to try to pursue a responsible line in a political environment evidently characterised by spin and disinformation at the time of the Dunfermline West by-election. The ForthRight Alliance is seeking assurances that the Scottish Executive will not take a decision on the future of possible further crossing across the Firth of Forth before having all the facts all the facts at its disposal. It is our understanding that this information will not be available until the completion of the commissioned cable replacement / augmentation feasibility study, due in May 2007.

Membership of The ForthRight Alliance includes the following organisations:

Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

Should you wish to submit an e-petition allowing signatures to be gathered on-line on the Public Petitions Committee e-petitioner web pages please complete the template below. Before submitting your e-petition please consult the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on what is and is not admissible. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

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<td>Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to.</td>
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<td>Mark Hood</td>
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<th>Text of petition:</th>
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<tr>
<td>The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petition by Mark Hood calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to consider the need for a new Forth road bridge.</td>
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<th>Period for gathering signatures:</th>
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<td>Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks</td>
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<td>Closing date: 15 March 2006</td>
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The Forth Estuary Transport Authority had powers conferred on it by the Scottish Parliament that gave it delegated powers with regards to the Forth Road Bridge and the development of surrounding road networks. In the process of undertaking the duties the Board has agreed that there should be a new bridge and this decision has been informed by a variety of technical reports. Recent reports said that all HGVs would be banned from using the bridge by 2013 and that all cars would no longer be able to use the bridge by 2019. The Scottish Executive have asked for yet more reports. The existing bridge is now carrying more than three times the capacity than was ever envisaged when it was first designed. 44 tonne HGVs had never been dreamt of and the scale of housing development across Scotland north of the Forth was never anticipated.

There is real urgency regarding a decision since the existing bridge was opened after a lead in time that took from 1947 from drawing board to the opening of the bridge in 1964. The timescale has equally been long from agreement in principle in the early 1990’s and will only start construction in late 2006. The swiftest that any bridge of such a scale has been built is in Hong Kong where the agreement to opening took only six years.

The Forth Crossing has national importance and is thought to be part of the Trans European Road Network. The crossing is part of the strategic road network and with the Superfast Ships facilitating development of the Road Freight capacity has increased in importance.

The Central and Eastern regions of Scotland are dependent on the crossing with links to the more fragile Highlands region as well as Aberdeen and Tayside. The lack of any crossing at this point would create a major disconnect to and threaten the Aberdeen Oil Sector for which Edinburgh International Airport has become of key importance.

Tourism to the area north of the Forth has grown by over 50% and this too would be in jeopardy. The Tayside Economic Forum has agreed that a new bridge should be an urgent priority.

The economic development and growth in Edinburgh has resulted in many new homes being built in Fife but without the commerce or industry to support the families that have purchased these new homes. As a consequence there is now a dependency on the bridge for the commuters who live in Fife but work in the areas surrounding the City of Edinburgh. Only 12% of the traffic crossing the bridge head for the City Centre at peak commuter times. The other traffic has destinations including East Lothian, the City Bypass, Livingstone, Linlithgow, Falkirk, Glasgow, Stirling and West Lothian.

Fife Council has for more than ten years invested heavily in collaboration with the Scottish Executive in efforts to build capacity in public transport to assist in the process of taking commuters off the road network. However, there remains a desperate shortage of capacity and commuters are continuing to be served by an extremely poor rail service. The performance levels of ScotRail continue to leave a lot to be desired with Helen Eadie MSP receiving many representations from discontented commuters. Whilst bus services have greatly improved there continues to be problems for shift workers, especially hospital workers from Fife who work in the Edinburgh hospitals being able to access reliable public transport.

There are plans for City and Metropolitan Regions to be developed but all of these policy objectives will be put at risk in the event that the crossing at the Forth Bridge is not secured. Dundee may potentially be marginalised in its economic development if the future of this crossing is not made absolutely secure.

The impact on industry and commerce for this entire area is potentially huge. 11,000 people commute into Fife to work each day and 28,000 Fifers commute south out of Fife heading for the various destinations mentioned earlier. 24% of the inbound commuters are from Edinburgh into Fife. 75% of all of these commuters take the car because either the destinations of public transport does not accommodate the transport needs of the commuters or the existing public transport is so unreliable. More people would travel by Public Transport if the service was radically improved and expanded.

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
There are capacity issues in developing better public transport for more trains with constraints caused by both the need for development in Waverley station and also the need for coal to continue to need routes out of Fife. This situation will not improve in the short term.

66% of Finance and Business commuters work in Edinburgh City. 25% of commuters out of Fife work in the Financial and Business Services.

In the area immediately to the north of the Forth Bridge there are a number of initiatives in the process of development. For example, there is Rosyth as a National Transport Hub; there is strategic employment land, strategic development areas, medium scale expansion areas, economic development zones, business growth corridors, coastal regeneration zones, South Fife economic development zone, St. Andrews World Class Environmental Improvement Priority.

The economy of the whole of East Central Scotland is urgently in need of reassurances from the Scottish Executive. The call is for another crossing to replace the existing crossing to be urgently agreed in recognition of the long lead in time and the fact that all other alternatives to a new bridge/tunnel crossing will be at capacity by 2012 and this is borne out by the outcome of the SITCOS study.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-petition:
Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern, by for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Fife Councillors and MSPs are supportive of this petition and they have been making representations on this issue of a replacement Forth Road Bridge for some time now. My local MSP Helen Eadie tabled a motion on this issue. Scott Barrie the MSP for the neighbouring constituency also table a motion and secured a member’s business debate. Parliamentary Questions have been put to the Scottish Executive Ministers at Question time for a number of years now.

Union delegates from this constituency put a motion to the Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline Trades and they agreed to present a motion to the STUC Annual Conference which was passed over two years ago.

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:
Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

- Given the length of time required to plan and construct a 2nd crossing work needs to start as soon as possible.
- If there is any restriction on traffic crossing the Forth estuary the local economies will suffer.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee
The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee’s consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee
I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
**Signature of principal petitioner:**

*When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.*

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<th>Signature ...</th>
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<td>Date: 12\textsuperscript{th} December 2005</td>
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**For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:**

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  
Tel: 0131 348 5186  
Fax: 0131 348 5088  
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

**Note**  
Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Our Ref: AASA/CM/K92

The Scottish Parliament
Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
Parliamentary Headquarters
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

23rd June 2006

Dear Dr Johnston

Consideration of Petition PE942 and PE943

I am writing with reference to your letter of 4 April 2006 seeking comments from the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) on the above petitions and the issues which arose during the committee’s discussions on the case for/against a new Forth road bridge.

A detailed response was approved at the FETA board meeting on Friday 23rd June.

Please find attached a copy of the paper in which the responses to the issues raised are in italics.

Yours faithfully

Alastair Andrew
General Manager
Response to the Scottish Parliament’s Public Petitions Committee – Petitions PE942 and PE943

23 June 2006

1 Purpose of report

1.1 By letter dated 2 April 2006 (attached) from Dr James Johnston, Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee I was asked to comment on Petitions PE942 and PE943 and also on issues raised during the committee's discussions on the case for / against a new Forth road bridge. In accord with FETA Transport Policy no. 17, this paper argues the case for moving forward at an early date with procurement of a new multi-modal crossing.

2 Loading

2.1 The Forth Road Bridge opened in 1964 and was designed to sustain the loadings specified in British Standard BS153: Part 3A of 1954. This loading was derived for a train of up to five 22 ton and eight 10 ton lorries followed by lighter vehicles. At an early date this loading was found to have limitations. Between 1962 and 1977, the amount of goods moved by road doubled and the weight / length ratio of heavy vehicles increased with the advent of containers. Over the years, the weight and numbers of heavy vehicles has continued to increase. In 2001, the 44 tonne lorry was introduced to UK roads.

2.2 By the end of 2003, over 50,000 lorries were registered at the higher weight limit and they accounted for 45% of all freight movement on Britain's roads. (Ref. 1)

2.3 Following advice from the Scottish Office in 1983, the Forth Road Bridge Joint Board commissioned a loading and structural integrity assessment as a result of concerns raised over measured traffic loads on the similar Severn suspension bridge. That report concluded that the Forth Road Bridge should be assessed for a load of 5935 tonnes. The original design load was 2880 tonnes. (Ref. 2)

2.4 Following on from this assessment, the main towers and saddles were strengthened. Strengthening works are still required to the steel stiffening truss which supports the suspended deck. (Ref. 3)

2.5 In response to a request for statistics for HGV traffic, this varies throughout the day from 6% in the morning peak to 10-13% during the greater part of the day.
The afternoon figure is 2-4%. During the working day the number of HGVs is constant at approximately 360 vehicles per hour in both directions. Over a typical day the bridge carries 180,000 tonnes, 50% being derived from HGVs which constitute 6% of the traffic.

2.6 It was suggested that only the largest trucks should be banned in order to reduce the loading. As described earlier, the 44 tonne trucks account for 45% of all freight movement. Banning them from the Forth Road bridge would cause serious congestion on the A977 diversion route and create severe problems for the haulage industry and those businesses (including retail) which depend upon them.

3 Main Suspension Cables

3.1 The main cables are the primary load bearing members on a suspension bridge and are highly non-redundant. The main cables on Forth carry a tension of almost 14,000 tonnes. As confirmed by an independent audit commissioned by the Scottish Executive, FETA’s consultants have advised that the loss of strength in the main cables due to serious corrosion is 8% and that if the corrosion cannot be halted; load restrictions will be required by 2013 at the earliest. This assessment of loading restriction assumes that the worst section was uncovered during the 2004/05 inspection which examined 4% of the cable length. (Ref. 4)

3.2 To increase confidence that the worst section has been uncovered, FETA has begun installing acoustic monitoring equipment on the cables. This system will provide continuous monitoring of wire breaks over the long term.

3.3 The Scottish Executive’s audit also endorsed FETA’s decision to acquire a dry air injection system (de-humidification) in an attempt to halt the corrosion process. Whilst de-humidification is being employed on newer bridges in Japan and Sweden as a “preventative” measure, there is no evidence that de-humidification is a “cure”. It will be 2010/11 before its success or otherwise can be established. By that time it will be too late to decide upon a new crossing as load restrictions may be required by 2013/14 as agreed with the Scottish Executive and FETA’s consultants. Based on their experience, the consultants who delivered the second Severn Crossing advised a procurement time for a new crossing of the Forth at 10-11 years. (Severn studies commissioned by DfT commenced in 1984 and the bridge opened in 1996)

3.4 In parallel with “health” monitoring by acoustic means and tackling corrosion with de-humidification, FETA is preparing to commission a feasibility study into replacing or augmenting the main cables. This major study will be available early in 2008 and will report on the specific problems identified on Forth including the additional tower loading, the cable anchorages and the stiffening-truss. Most importantly, safety issues involved in carrying out the works above live traffic lanes will be examined.

3.5 The comment was made that acoustic monitoring will give a much more accurate picture of how bad the corrosion is and we may find that it is not as bad as the consultants have said. It must be emphasised that the equipment is only capable of detecting new wire breaks. At best it will confirm the current estimate of strength and at worst it will uncover weaker sections. A cable (or chain) is only as strong as its weakest section (or link).
3.6 It is the case that cable strengthening works on the 25 de Abril bridge spanning the Tagus in Portugal were completed in 1998. Strengthening was not brought about by corrosion. The bridge had originally been designed to carry light rail through its stiffening truss and additional cables were retrofitted to facilitate this. Whilst the bridge did not close completely during the works, lane restrictions were required. We have ample experience of the detrimental effects on the central Scotland strategic road network when lane restrictions are applied on Forth, even off-peak. Furthermore and importantly, Health & Safety legislation, particularly in the UK has become increasingly more onerous over the 8 years since the Tagus works were completed and will result in further restrictions. (Ref. 5)

4 Other Maintenance Works

4.1 The steel deck of the suspended span relies upon the composite action of the thin mastic surfacing layer to increase the fatigue resistance of the welded joints. The mastic also plays a vital role in protecting the steel deck from corrosion. This naturally occurring material originally lasted 24 years but now requires to be replaced after 8-9 years. This work is weather susceptible and can only be carried out during dry, warm weather. This work causes serious traffic delays (although restricted to weekends) and of course conflicts with the demands of the tourist industry which is so important to Scotland's economy.

4.2 The primary cause of premature failure of the surfacing is believed to be the widespread use of "super single" high pressure tyres on the trailers of articulated vehicles.

4.3 It was suggested that trucks with "super singles" be banned to alleviate this problem. This would involve virtually every articulated vehicle - not only those with a 44 tonnes gross weight. This would be difficult to police and cause congestion elsewhere on the network. Eg. when high-sided vehicles, many of them articulated vehicles are diverted away from Forth during high winds this causes a gridlock effect in the vicinity of Kincardine and its approach roads.

4.4 Overdue replacement of the main expansion joints and possible replacement of the vehicular parapets on the bridge cannot be restricted to overnight or weekend possessions. These works and others in the fifteen year maintenance plan including bearing replacement will result in increasing traffic restrictions.

5 Cross Forth Travel Issues

5.1 With Scottish Executive funding, the SESTRAN partners appointed a consortium of consultants to undertake Integrated Transport Corridor Studies on five corridors around Edinburgh and the Forth Valley. (Ref. 6)

5.2 By far the biggest and most costly was the Queensferry Cross Forth Corridor and it involved consideration of people, freight and vehicle movements starting or finishing outwith the study area, but travelling across the Forth at Queensferry.

5.3 The approach adopted complied with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) involving identifying current and future characteristics of travel and the
generation of wide-ranging options to address the objectives. A total of 70 options were identified during a brainstorming session prior to sifting to eliminate impractical suggestions.

5.4 The recommendations of the extensive study, published in June 2005 were grouped into three timescales: Short Term (1-5 years), Medium Term (5-10 years) and Long Term (10+ years).

5.5 The Short term measures included: - making public transport more attractive, provide new bus-based Park & Choose site at Halbeath and expand Rosyth into a Park & Choose, provide a new HOV lane between Halbeath and the bridgehead, integrate bus and rail services in Fife etc.

5.6 The Medium Term recommendations include: - Revised rail patterns to maximise use of the Forth rail capacity, split the Fife circle to enhance services throughout Fife and providing two additional trains per hour via Edinburgh Airport, support Park & Choose at key locations and completion of the bus "right-of-way" network between Fife and Edinburgh etc.

5.7 The Long Term recommendation: - The study notes that, "by 2011, the palliative effects of all short and medium term recommendations would have been exhausted and even demand management could not contain traffic at, or below, its 2001 levels" (the target reduction). The long term recommendation comprises the Short and Medium Term recommendations as set out above, supplemented by the building of a new Forth Multi-Modal Crossing to provide flexible capacity.

5.8 The new crossing would be wide and strong enough to carry LRT or tram and in combination with traffic management measures on the existing bridge would offer no additional lanes for single-occupant vehicles.

5.9 Disbenefits of not providing a new crossing include:-
- restriction of bridgehead economic development
- increasing delay at peak and deteriorating reliability
- further peak spreading
- difficulty in conducting even routine bridge maintenance
- possible adverse impacts on the SESTRAN economy.

5.10 Comment - the SITCoS work assumes all current proposed bus improvements are delivered, Fife circle trains are six-car, that the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine line has already allowed further train paths on the Forth bridge, Waverley station improvements are complete and that EARL has been completed.

5.11 In response to the discussion which took place regarding Kincardine bridge and its possible impact upon traffic heading for the Forth Road bridge, evidence presented at the public local inquiry into the new Kincardine bridge was that none of the options under consideration would materially impact on traffic volumes on the Forth Road bridge.
6 Conclusion

The case for moving forward at an early date with procurement of a new Multi-Modal crossing is a compelling one, brought about by three main issues:

- Uncertainties surrounding the longevity of the existing bridge’s main support cables, as confirmed by the Scottish Executive’s consultants.

- Ever increasing demands for disruptive maintenance works due to the bridge’s age, increase in load and changes in vehicle characteristics.

- Increasing demand for cross-Forth travel as identified in the SESTRAN Queensferry Corridor Study.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that members approve this report to the Scottish Parliament’s Public Petitions Committee.

Alastair A.S. Andrew  
General Manager & Bridgemaster

Contact/tel  Alastair Andrew  General Manager  0131 319 3071

Background Papers

3. FETA Local Transport Strategy 2005
Dr. James Johnston,
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament
TG.01,
Parliamentary Headquarters,
EDINBURGH,
EH99 1SP.

Your Ref: 
Our Ref: DS/EAL/J7.6

22nd May, 2006

Dear Dr. Johnston,

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE942 AND PE943

Thank you for your letter dated 4th April, 2006, in the above connection. My comments are as follows:-


The Fife Council Local Transport Strategy 2006 (draft) also supports the development of a new multi-modal crossing.


This Structure Plan will provide for Fife a land use framework to deliver job opportunities, a range of quality housing, improved accessibility and strengthened community infrastructure all within a high quality environment.

The main points of the strategy in support of a new multi-modal Forth crossing at Queensferry are as follows:-

The strategy to grow both Fife’s economy and population is:-

- to support the national and Edinburgh City Region economy through the development of a new multi-modal Forth crossing at Queensferry (ref Para 1.16)

The strategy to improve accessibility to, from and within Fife is:-

- to maximise the efficient use of existing Forth and Tay crossings through supporting increased modal shift to public transport and car share (ref Para 1.18)
Dunfermline - The potential to connect a light rail transit (light rapid transit) network to Edinburgh City and West Edinburgh will be accommodated should a new multi-modal crossing of the Forth be built (ref Para 2.4).

Policy T2 - Safeguarding of Existing and Potential Transport Routes

- Landfall for approach infrastructure for a potential new multi-modal crossing of the Forth.

Proposal PT1: Transport Proposals

National/International

- New multi-modal cross-Forth bridge and associated approach networks at Queensferry - initial feasibility study with potential for a new bridge within the Plan period.

- Segregated public transport corridor through the Forth Bridgehead area, including the existing Dunfermline Eastern Expansion area, with potential to link to a further Forth crossing.

The new multi-modal crossing would be part of a larger transportation strategy for the Central belt of Scotland as the existing Forth Road Bridge is part of strategic road network linking the North and East of Scotland to the Lothians, Scottish Borders and across the border into England.

It would be part of long term measures for the area and would enhance public transport investment which has been spent and will continue to be spent by Fife Council, Scottish Executive, SESTRAN and FETA on the support of improved travel options for cross Forth travel. It is important to stress that SITCoS proposed a Balanced Strategy covering the short, medium and long term.

- **Short Term**
  - Implement measures to make Public Transport More Attractive;
  - Provide new, bus-based Park and Cho chooses site at Halbeath and expand Rosyth into Park and Choose location;
  - Provide a newly constructed southbound HOV Lane between Halbeath and the northern bridgehead;
  - Introduce “quick win” bus priority measures in Fife on A907, A823 and around Rosyth;
  - Procure additional bus services on key Cross Forth routes;
  - Improve the integration of bus and rail in Fife, including enhanced local bus feeders to key rail stations particularly Rosyth, Halbeath and Dalgety Bay; and
  - Make those land reservations required to support future plans (e.g. Dunfermline South station).

- **Medium Term**
Revised rail patterns to maximise use of Cross Forth rail capacity, including “splitting the circle” to provide enhanced services throughout Fife, and providing two additional trains per hour, both operating via Edinburgh Airport;

Support for Park and Choose at key locations: Inverkeithing (extension of car park including access road), Ferrytoll (including the new overspill site) and Dalgety Bay, in addition to the site at Halbeath featured in the short-term recommendations; and

Completion of the Bus “Right-of-Way” network between Fife and Edinburgh, predominantly bus priority work on the A90 south of the Forth.

and, as a supplement to these measures, if demand for Cross Forth travel continued to rise in such a way that it could not be accommodated, particularly on the Forth Road Bridge, then demand management in the form of differential tolling and reduced Cross Forth rail fares should form the prerequisite to.

- Long Term

- A new multi-modal crossing of the Forth

Transport Minister Tavish Scott said:-

"Cabinet today agreed we need to start planning now for a replacement Firth of Forth crossing given the findings of corrosion in the Forth Road Bridge. There are no immediate safety concerns - but there are two potential long-term problems.

"Our most optimistic timeframe for replacing the crossing is 2014, if planning work starts now. But that planning may prove unnecessary, because at this point we don't have all the answers."

(Ref: Scottish Executive website/news release 1st March, 2006)

“Starting preparatory work does not commit us to constructing a new crossing. Given the evidence, however, it is essential to start preparations in case the bridge needs to be replaced. That will ensure that if a new crossing is needed, time will not be lost waiting for the results of relevant studies. Transport Scotland will take the work forward as part of the strategic projects review. The role of any replacement crossing will be properly considered in light of the national transport strategy."


However, in light of the current and future maintenance issues facing FETA, and the national significance of this strategic crossing for the economy of the East of Scotland, it is essential to commence the design of the new crossing before the restrictions are implemented in the future.

Whilst SITCoS and other works have progressed to maintain and assess the longevity concerns of the existing bridge, a new crossing is required for the next 120 years to cope with the future expectations.
Yours sincerely,

Douglas Sinclair,
Chief Executive.
Dear Dr Johnston

Thank you for your letter of 4 April 2006 seeking the Scottish Executive’s comments on Petitions PE942 and PE943.

During a statement made in Parliament by the Minister for Transport, Tavish Scott, on 1 March 2006 the Minister acknowledged that an independent study commissioned by the Scottish Executive had confirmed Forth Estuary Transport Authority’s (FETA) concerns about cable corrosion on the Forth Road Bridge. FETA is now progressing with work which may slow the rate of cable corrosion or halt, it completely, however, the results of this work may not become apparent for a number of years. It is also considering the feasibility of replacing or augmenting the existing cables. Depending on the effectiveness of these protective measures it may still be necessary to provide a replacement crossing at some time after 2013 in order to protect cross Forth travel.

That is why it is sensible to start preparatory work now on a possible replacement crossing due to the significant planning and construction time required if an infrastructure project of this size becomes necessary. This work does not commit us to constructing a new crossing, however, it does mean that time will not be lost in the future with preparatory work if the crossing needs to be replaced.

Transport Scotland has recently commenced work on a Strategic Transport Projects Review to consider, plan and prioritise strategic transport infrastructure investment beyond our current committed projects. Such projects will be required to deliver the emerging National Transport Strategy. The Review will ensure that Scotland has the programmed transport infrastructure needed to support Scotland’s growing economy. It will also assess the strategic environmental impacts of proposals to ensure these are consistent with government policies and commitments. A replacement Forth crossing will be considered as part of this Review. Although the findings of the Review are not expected until the summer 2008, it is anticipated that the Forth replacement crossing work will be reporting in summer 2007.I hope that this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Jackie McCaig
12 June 2006

Dr James Johnston
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Dr Johnston

Consideration of Petition PE942 and PE943

I have read the two petitions named above.

The Forth Road Bridge is a vital piece of transport infrastructure and is of substantial national importance for the Scottish economy. Efficient, appropriate connectivity at the local, regional, national and international levels are critically important for the Scottish economy to develop.

Traffic on the Forth Road Bridge has risen steadily from 4 million vehicles in 1964 (when the bridge was opened) to more than 23 million vehicles in 2002. In addition to an increase in traffic volume, the heaviest commercial vehicles in 1964 weighed 24 tonnes. That has increased to 44 tonnes today. The bridge is now being used well beyond what it was originally designed for. It is very important for the economy to maintain the functionality of this structure, or a replacement or additional structure, so that the economy that it supports can continue to grow.

Scottish Enterprise welcomes the extensions to funding granted last year to the Forth Estuary Transport Association (which operates the bridge), to finance major structural upgrading. However, despite the effort to upgrade the structure, given its strategic importance to the Scottish economy at the national level, we consider it necessary for the Scottish Parliament to fully investigate the useful life of the existing bridge and to proactively plan any replacement or additional structure which may be necessary.

Yours sincerely

Jack