



SCOTTISH CONSUMER COUNCIL

**RESPONSE TO THE
“STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE TRUNK
ROAD PROGRAMME IN SCOTLAND:
CONSULTATION PAPER
ON THE
APPRAISAL OF TRUNK ROAD
INVESTMENT”**

OCTOBER 1998

**The Scottish Consumer Council’s
Response to the “Strategic Review Of The
Trunk Road Programme In Scotland: Consultation
Paper On The Appraisal Of Trunk Road Investment”**

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A BRIEF GUIDE

- encourage consumer representation in the public services and the privatised utilities;

Response to the “Strategic Review Of The Trunk Road Programme In Scotland: Consultation Paper On The Appraisal Of Trunk Road Investment”

The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) was set up by the government in 1975 to promote the interests of consumers, particularly those who experience disadvantage in society.

While producers and suppliers of goods and services are usually well organised and articulate when protecting their own interests, individual consumers very often are not. The people we represent are consumers of all kinds: they may be council tenants, patients, parents, solicitors’ clients, public transport users, or simply shoppers in a supermarket. We speak up for them by communicating with the professions, industry, business, local authorities and central government, using careful research and persuasive lobbying.

Our broad aims are to:

- represent, promote and safeguard the interests of consumers in Scotland;
- promote the provision of advice and information, choice, representation and redress for the consumers of goods and services;
- identify issues and problems of specific consumer concern;
- monitor and report on services for consumers in the public and private sectors and recommend changes in practice where necessary;
- influence key decision-making processes, policy and practice;

PUBLICATIONS

The Scottish Consumer Council publishes reports, policy papers and consumer information on a range of areas.

A full list of our publications is available on request from The Scottish Consumer Council, Royal Exchange House, 100 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3DN

- publicise ideas and information of consumer interest and concern;
- play a distinctive and leading role in Scottish affairs.

OUR APPROACH

When we investigate the way goods and services are being provided - whether it is buying a used car or going into hospital - we use six basic principles to guide our research:

- **access** - can people get the goods, services or information they need?
- **choice** - can consumers affect the way goods and services are provided through the choices they make in the marketplace?
- **information** - is information available, is it easy to understand, and does it help customers to make informed choices?
- **safety** - are goods produced to the highest of standards of safety?
- **redress** - is there a simple, cheap, quick and fair system for dealing with complaints and disputes if things go wrong?
- **representation** - are consumers’ views properly represented in services where there is little or no consumer choice?

The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation paper *Strategic Review of the Trunk Road Programme in*

Scotland: The Appraisal of Trunk Road Investment. As an organisation which was established to represent the interests of consumers in Scotland, we have a long standing interest in transport and transport related issues and how these impact on consumers’ opportunities. The SCC have recently responded to the White Paper *Travel Choices for Scotland* published in July 1988 and the National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG) on Transport and Planning and the Planning Advice Note (PAN) on Transport and Planning.

In all of these documents the SCC welcomed the commitment to an approach based on the twin objectives of sustainable transport that ensures “we do not compromise our way of living through our choices” (White Paper, point 1.1.7) and an integrated transport policy that works in the interest of consumers. We welcomed the governments recognition in the White Paper that “to get the best transport policy we need first to remember that transport is about serving people’s needs, not primarily about vehicles or engineering.” (White Paper, point 1.1.3) The government states that transport policies will work together with other policies, in pursuit of a higher quality of life for Scotland through the objectives of:

- a strong economy
- a clean environment
- an inclusive society

The SCC therefore welcomes the draft document *Strategic Review of the Trunk Road Programme in Scotland* and in particular we welcome the commitment to these objectives.

The SCC acknowledges the recognition of the need to pursue the objective of working towards a transport system that is inclusive for all members of society. The SCC believe the governments recognition that to get the best transport policy we need first to remember that transport is about serving people’s needs, not primarily about vehicles or engineering, is an important point for inclusion in the review of the trunk roads programme in Scotland. While we welcome the documents sentiments in this regard, we hope that this is not just rhetoric and will actually be adopted in the process.

The SCC further welcomes the commitment to transparency and openness, as shown by the consultation process. As the document is essentially of a technical nature, the SCC has no relevant experience with which to offer further comments.