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S30084519

**Rural Planning and
Environmental
Assessment
Investigative Report**

Date: 14/04/2024

Word Count: 2986

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Introduction to Sheriffhall Roundabout

Sheriffhall Roundabout, see Figure 1, is a major roundabout on the A720, also known as the “Edinburgh City Bypass”.

The A720 is an important trunk road in Scotland’s road network. Built between 1980-1989, the 13-mile dual carriage way road circles the south of the city of Edinburgh, and directly links together other major road networks such as the A1 and M8, while providing access to the M9 and M90 via the A8.

Sheriffhall Roundabout is the only roundabout on the A720. With 6 junctions it links the A7, A720 and A6106, so not only is it a vitally important road for Scotland’s wider road network, but directly links Edinburgh with neighbouring towns and villages in Midlothian.

The roundabout was originally built as an “at-grade” junction. This is when conflicting traffic flows meet in the same location, such as a roundabout. Allegedly it was built this way as opposed to a “grade separated junction” (where bridges and tunnels keep conflicting traffic flows apart) due to geological faults under the junction and ongoing coal mining works nearby.

Due to increased pressures such as population growth in Edinburgh and surrounding areas, and 20% increases in the number of cars on the road, the Sheriffhall Roundabout can be a large bottleneck at peak traffic flow times. As such, in 2015 Traffic Scotland named it one of the most dangerous junctions due to the number of injuries occurring at this location (SABRE Roads, 2021).

As the only at-grade junction on the A720 and with the roundabout now being beyond maximum capacity, the need for a new grade-separated junction at Sheriffhall was identified in 2008, under the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR). It was identified that work should be undertaken on the Sheriffhall Roundabout to reduce conflicts between strategic and local traffic, and that by doing so could contribute to better road safety and journey time reliability (Transport Scotland, 2009).

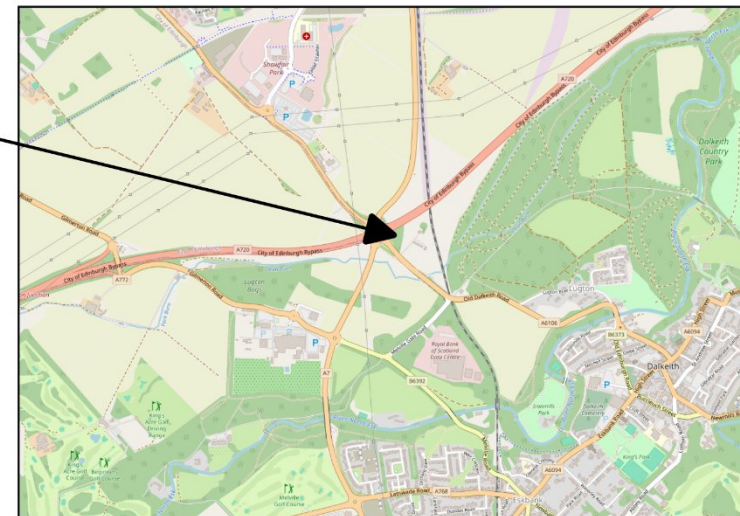
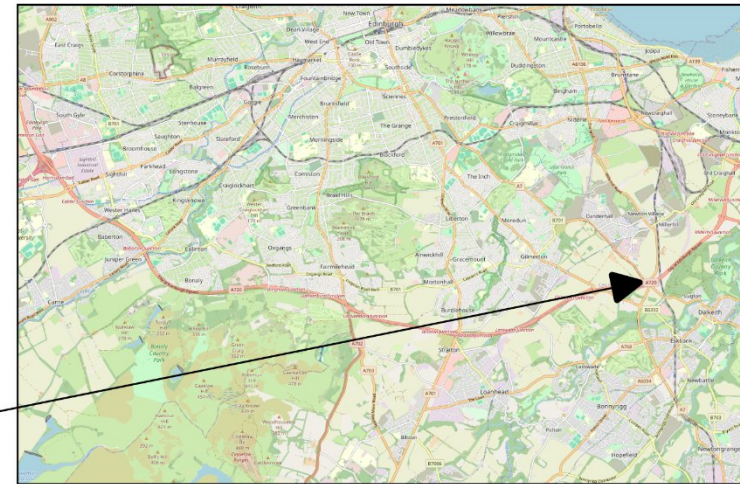
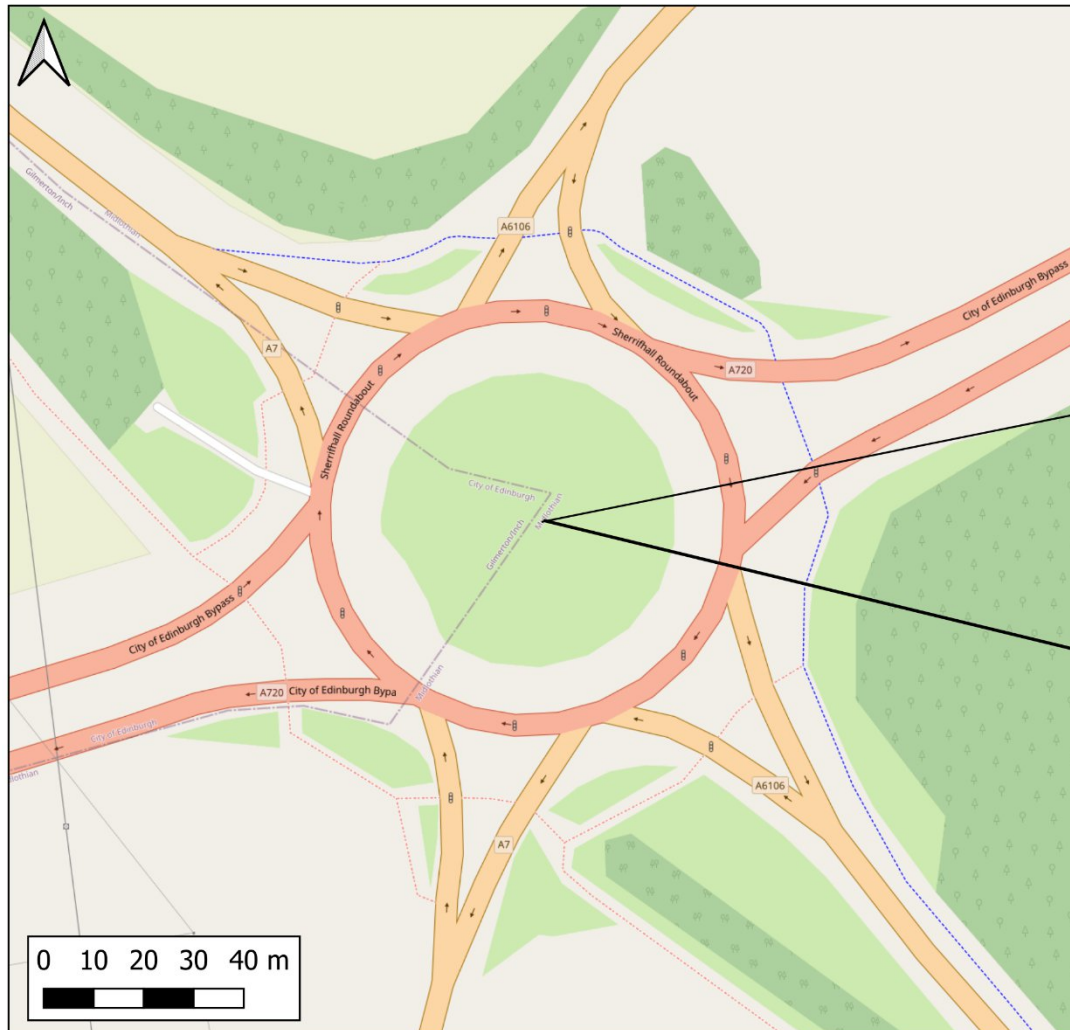
The 2008 STPR also identified that improving the Sheriffhall Roundabout to a more efficient junction could help reduce transport-based emissions (Transport Scotland, 2009), which Scotland and the UK were obliged to do at that time under the Kyoto Protocol, which was an international treaty signed in 1998 that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (UN, 1998).

The same STPR 2008 report also acknowledges improvements on the A720, including the Sheriffhall Roundabout are needed to maintain a 60-minute commutable labour market for Edinburgh, while also improving access to Shawfair new-town (Transport Scotland, 2009), which is identified as one of seven strategic sites for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021).

In 2017 a preferred option for the scheme was identified, and since then, has been subject to detailed development and assessments, including consultations with non-motorised users such as cyclists and walkers. This has been done to ensure that there has been provision for both motorised and non-motorised users in the proposed development.

Draft Orders and Environmental Statement for the scheme were published in December 2019, awaiting formal comment, with Statutory Consultation closing 31/1/2020. A decision on the proposed £120m scheme, that could rise to £200m, is to be made by Scottish Ministers in “due course” (Transport Scotland, 2024).

Sheriffhall Roundabout Map



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Figure 1 - Sheriffhall Roundabout and A720

Review of Chapter

Introduction to AECOM and EIA Report

Before the construction of any major Schedule 1 infrastructure project such as this, an Environmental Impact Assessment has to be conducted.

This is to ensure potential environmental impacts have been assessed, natural resources and ecosystems are protected, sustainable development has been promoted and to ensure stakeholders and public have been engaged. This is covered under Scots Law "*The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017*".

The Environmental Report for the new proposed Sheriffhall Hall roundabout junction was written by AECOM, a leading global Fortune 500 infrastructure consultancy firm with over \$14.4 billion in revenue and 52,000 employees (2023).

The 1st draft was released 01 March 2019, with the finalised issue of the 21-chapter report being published on 02 December 2019, after being verified by Zeo McClelland (AECOM Associate Director) and Gareth Coughlin (AECOM Technical Director) before being approved by Ryan Hutchison (AECOM Technical Director) (McClelland, 2019), who combined have several decades of experience in planning, environmental assessments and large-scale infrastructure projects (Source: individuals LinkedIn profiles).

To help visualise the proposed development and to show the scale of the £120m proposed scheme, Figure 2 shows the current state of the Sheriffhall Roundabout while Figure 3 shows the preferred option, Option B.



Figure 2 - Sheriffhall Roundabout as-is (Source:earth.google.com)



Figure 3 - Proposed Scheme "Option B"

Chapter 17: Material Assets and Waste

Chapter 17: Material Assets and Waste is a 31-page 12700-word report. The scope of the environmental assessment is to assess the potential depletion of non-renewable resources (primary aggregates) and to assess the generation of both non-hazardous and hazardous waste.

The report doesn't include operational and maintenance impacts associated with material assets and waste as compared to baseline, these are not expected to be significant.

The report was written based on the likely requirements of DMBR Volume 11, Section 3, Part 13 LLA 110. DMBR is the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges for all of the United Kingdom and is overseen by each Transport departments of the 4 devolved countries of the UK. A Stage 3 report sets out *“detailed design of a preferred route, with more detailed site level survey and environmental assessment to inform design level mitigation and enhancement measures”*.

The report lead for Chapter 17 was the highly experienced Mike Bains, Chartered Chemist as well as being a member of the Royal Society of Chemistry, who has 25 years of experience in Environmental consultancy, mostly in waste management (AECOM, 2019d).

The report acknowledges that there are several pieces of legislation that are applicable to waste management, such as European Waste Framework Directive (WFD), with the rest listed in Appendix 3 and utilises the Waste Hierarchy (Prevention > Reduction > Reuse> Recovery > Disposal)

The report further acknowledges the proposed scheme has to adhere to National, Regional and Local policies such as National Planning Framework 3 (now NPF4), South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan and Edinburgh Local Development Plan respectively, with the rest listed in Appendix 4.

The fact the report openly lists and describes the relevance of all EU, UK, Scottish and local laws and policies shows absolute transparency from AECOM. This is compared to other reports of a similar nature such as Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore A9 dualling that mentions they will comply with all legislation, but doesn't actually list the legislation (Fairhurst, 2017a), which could be interpreted that the project is trying to hide something.

Something that is less transparent in Chapter 17 is Section 17.2.1 Approach and Methodology and 17.2.13 Impact Assessment. As above it states they have used DMBR LLA10 as guidance, but the rest of the section is quite vague, especially in comparison to a similar report for the entire A9 dualling project, that states they have used GIS mapping (complete with example screenshots), to identify environmental risks/issues within each proposed corridor of the A9 dualling project (Halcrow, 2013). In the interests of transparency perhaps AECOM should've mentioned what geospatial approaches were used such as GIS or other modelling to form their conclusions.

Material Assets

17.6 and Table 17-8 of Chapter 17 describes the different materials required and approximate estimates of material quantity for the proposed scheme. For complete transparency they have referenced WRAP's "Designing Out Waste Tool for Civil Engineering" stating standard, good and best practices with regards to the amount of recycled content of the main aggregates and materials used for constructing the proposed scheme, this keeps the contractor accountable for ensuring these practices are adhered to.

However, for Material Assets, AECOM don't recognise "Embodied Carbon Emissions" that come from raw material extraction, product processing and product manufacturing nor the

transportation of these goods within the supply chain, while a similar report, while acknowledging the complexity of modelling for this, has provided a table with Magnitude of Impact for Total CO₂e of materials (tonnes) (Fairhurst, 2017b).

Another thing worth noting is that AECOM have listed Recycled Aggregate Suppliers in Chapter 7 under Table 17-4, which are located in Edinburgh and neighbouring Lothian and Fife council areas, but do also mention under section 17.2.7 that the entire study area for supplies is the whole of the United Kingdom and globally for steel, showing inconsistencies as nowhere else in the report does it mention suppliers further afield which could have adverse effects on climate change.

AECOM have found that the effects of material assets during construction could be “slight adverse” and therefore is not considered significant based on number of aggregates and materials required versus availability, however this is in contrast to the UK Governments stance that states “primary aggregates as being at risk of future scarcity for the UK construction and civil engineering sector” (DEFRA, 2011). A similar report for A9 Dualling includes this statement in its report, however AECOM omits it from theirs.

Inert and Non-Hazardous Waste

Table 17-10 “Estimated construction waste quantities” of Chapter 17 shows that AECOM have identified the non-hazardous waste materials and their weights, see Appendix 6.

AECOM have stated that the UK Governments target for recovery of construction waste is 70%, but have found that through Mitigation Item M5, 95% of the 3739 tonnes of waste generated by the construction of the Proposed Scheme will be fully recoverable (AECOM, 2019a).

Furthermore, following DMBR Stage 3 best practice, it’s estimated that out of 448,203m³ total fill required, 108,000 tonnes of excavated material will be re-used onsite, further reducing waste from the Proposed Scheme while reducing primary aggregates as set out by Mitigation Item M3 (AECOM, 2019b).

With these findings and mitigations to reduce waste and based on landfill capacity of 6,289,935 tonnes of as per the number of landfills in the SESPlan area, the inert and non-hazardous waste produced from the Proposed Scheme would utilise around 0.92% of landfill capacity, and as such AECOM have concluded the impact for this could be slightly adverse but not significant.

However, it should be noted that these figures were from 31st December 2018. Since then, table 17-6 within Chapter 7 (see Appendix 7), over 4,000,000 tonnes of landfill capacity have been lost due to closures. This means that depending on new landfill capacity being created between now and then, the magnitude of impact could now be between moderate and large with a significant effect on landfill within the SESplan area.

Another thing worth noting is that AECOM state waste generated from construction workers and the compound aren’t included in their report, but the Waste Management Plan for the Forth Crossing build included this waste (toner cartridges, glass, cans, paper, electronics) in their report (Abraham, 2016) . Perhaps for accountability reasons AECOM should’ve done similar.

Hazardous Waste

Chapter 17, section 17.6.23 states that 5,021 tonnes of waste generated from the Proposed Scheme would be classified as hazardous, with AECOM concluding that the residual impact could be moderate adverse, therefore being considered significant. This is because this amount of hazardous waste produced would capacity by over 6% at Avondale, Falkirk.

Since this report Avondale hazardous waste landfill has closed down, with the nearest hazardous waste facility to the Proposed Scheme being Augean North Ltd, Port Clarence Landfill Site, approximately 150 miles away from Sheriffhall Roundabout (SWECO, 2024).

As more than 50% of hazardous waste would need disposed off outside the region, the residual impact would be increased from moderate to large and still remain as a significant impact.

The report states that out of the 5021 tonnes of special waste, 4269 tonnes are contaminated soils and via mitigation measures such as soil washing (section 17.7.5, Mitigation item M7) the soil could potentially be re-used to reduce waste. Out of similar Stage 3 reports I have read for projects including AWPR (Aberdeen by-pass), several sections of A9 dualling, replacement Forth Crossing and Aberdeen South Harbour Link Road, none of these including mitigations like soil washing.

Review of Consultation

As part of an EIA, a full consultation has to take place. This section will be a review of the consultation undertaken by AECOM and Transport Scotland during DMBR Stage 3 of the design of the Proposed Scheme only.

In total there were 21 stakeholders consulted during various stages of Stage 3 Design consultation process. Table 1 outlines each stakeholder identified and why they were consulted.

Table 1 - Consultee's types

Consultee's	Type
Buccleuch Estates	Main Stakeholder/Landowner
City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)	Statutory Consultee
East Lothian Council (ELC)	Key Stakeholder
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Statutory Consultee
Midlothian Council (MLC)	Statutory Consultee
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)	Statutory Consultee
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	Statutory Consultee
Scottish Rights of Way and Accesses Society (Scotways)	Non-motorised User
Sustrans	Main Stakeholder/Non-motorised User
British Horse Society (BHS)	Non-motorised User
South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran)	Key Stakeholder
Spokes	Non-motorised User
Cycling UK	Non-motorised User
Forestry Commission	Key Stakeholder
Lothian Buses	Key Stakeholder
Transport Scotland	Statutory Consultee
Sheriffhall House	Landowner
Summerside	Landowner
South East Edinburgh Development Company	Landowner
Caledonian Trust	Landowner
Edinburgh Access Panel	Non-motorised User

(AECOM, 2019c)

The consultation process ran for two and a half years, starting in May 2017 and closing on the 31st January 2020 with several different consultation's conducted during that period.

- 1. Scoping Consultation (May 2017)** - Scope the opinions from Main Stakeholders and Statutory Consultees .
- 2. Non-motorised Users Workshop (August – October 2017)** – Discuss access for cyclists, walkers, disabled users and horse riders.
- 3. Key Environmental Stakeholders (Throughout 2018)** – Environmental stakeholders such as Lothian Buses, SEPA, SNH and FLS given further opportunity to provide comments on draft design.
- 4. Non-motorised Users Workshop (August 2018)** – Stakeholders narrowed down 17 shortlisted options down to 6, then down to 2 for non-motorised access.

5. **Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement period (January – February 2019)** – Further consultation with Main and Statutory stakeholders about specific detailed elements of the Proposed Scheme.
6. **Public Exhibitions (18-19 December 2019)** – Held Wednesday 18 December, 12 – 7pm St Nicholas Buccleuch Parish Church and Thursday 19 December, 12 – 7pm Sheriffhall Park and Ride Terminal.
7. **Statutory Consultation closes (31 Jan 2020)** – Consultation closed.
(AECOM, 2019c)

As I read the Consultation and Scoping Report, I originally thought the consultation was very thorough because not only were statutory consultees consulted but provision was made to include non-motorised users with three separate workshops.

However, when I compared this consultation report for non-motorised users to a similar road infrastructure upgrade consultation (A9 dualling Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie), there seemed to be a lack of consultee's for NMU's with only 10 for the Proposed Scheme at Sheriffhall compared to 20 for the A9 dualling section. I feel AECOM should've consulted with local rambling, cycling and disabled access groups and not just the larger national organisations.

I also feel AECOM has further neglected local voices. Again, the A9 dualling Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie project consulted with local community councils, groups and local businesses to hear their thoughts and concerns, while the Sheriffhall project seems to have omitted these groups and individuals for both Stage's 2 and 3 of the consultation process (FAIRHURST, 2017).

Another criticism of the consultation process for the Proposed Scheme is the public exhibitions. If the improvements at Sheriffhall Roundabout increases traffic capacity then this will have a knock-on effect for the wider Midlothian, East Lothian and Edinburgh areas.

While I acknowledge that there was 2 public exhibitions in Edinburgh and Dalkeith (Midlothian), due to the nature of the Proposed Scheme and the potential for increased traffic and the effect this could have on neighbourhood's, businesses, road users and active travellers (public transport and walking/cycling), I feel further more accessible public exhibitions should've took place in Edinburgh City Centre, Midlothian (such as Straiton) and East Lothian (such as Musselburgh) which Figure 3 on the next page demonstrates.

I also feel AECOM and Transport Scotland could've utilised technology more. For the proposed Aberdeen South Harbour Link Road, they have an extensive online exhibition ([See here](#)) using the latest ArcGIS application to supplement their in-person exhibition (Aberdeen City Council, 2024).

For maximum engagement and full transparency with regards to the consultation, and to allow everyone to participate, such as elderly, disabled people, working people, people out with the immediate areas the public exhibitions were held, I feel quite strongly online public exhibitions should've been used for the proposed scheme.

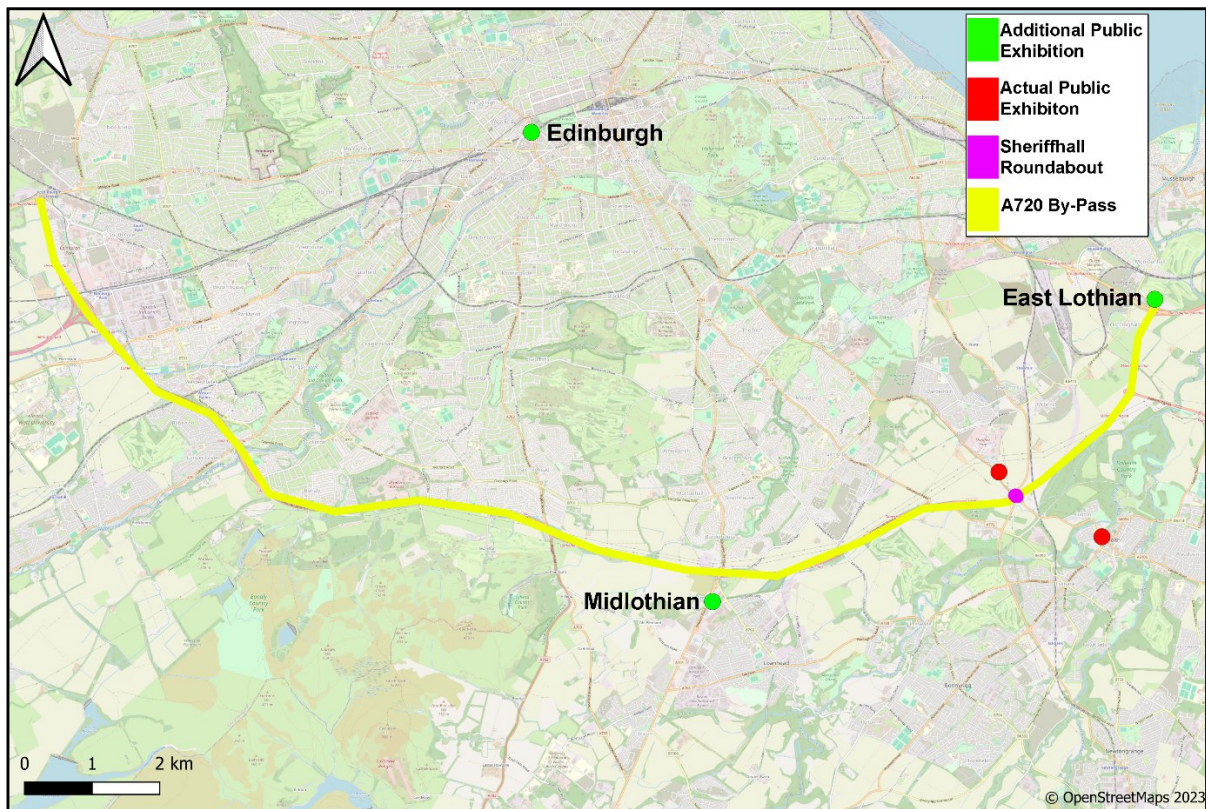


Figure 4 - Actual public exhibitions and potential exhibitions

Conclusion

Chapter 17 was a very thorough report-section headed up by an experienced team leader. It appears to adhere to all rules and policies as set out in DMBR Volume 11 LA110 (DMBR, 2019).

Through strong mitigation the report concludes that material use, and non-hazardous waste generated for the proposed scheme is not significant, this is because it seeks to use local resources while re-using as much as possible from the original site.

However, Chapter 17 finds the impact of hazardous waste to be significant, which could be further exacerbated by the closure of near-by Avondale hazardous waste facility. However, AECOM and Transport Scotland do seek to reduce this impact by a further mitigation (M7) to wash and re-purpose contaminated soil.

Despite attempts to reduce the environmental impact of the Proposed Scheme, I feel in some areas it feels short, such as not including transportation of materials and waste and not including the environment impact of the site compound(s) and staff, however the report does mention all relevant EU, UK, Scottish and local laws and policies which should be commended.

There was a long consultation period where-by AECOM and Transport Scotland consulted with main stakeholders. However, as mentioned previously, I feel they fell short on consultation by not including local stakeholders (groups, businesses etc) and by only having 2 public exhibitions for a scheme that may have a large impact on the wider areas of East Lothian, Midlothian and South Edinburgh.

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Appendix

Appendix 3 – Waste Management Legislation

- European Waste Framework Directive (WFD) (European Parliament, 2008)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990, Part II
- Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991
- Landfill (Scotland) Regulations 2003 - The Landfill (Scotland) Regulations
- Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011
- Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012
- Special Waste Regulations 1996

Appendix 4 - National, Regional and Local policies

National

- National Planning Framework 3 (Now NPF 4)
- Scottish Planning Policy
- Scotland's Zero Waste Plan
- Planning and Waste Management Advice
- Making Things Last: a circular economy strategy for Scotland
- One Planet Prosperity – A Waste to Resources Framework

Regional

- South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SDP)
- Proposed South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SDP2)
- A Zero Waste Future for Edinburgh and Midlothian

Local

- Edinburgh Local Development Plan
- Midlothian Local Development Plan

Appendix 5 – Estimated Materials

Table 17-8 Estimated Material Quantities

Project Element	Material	Unit	Approximate Estimated Material Quantity
Civil Engineering Structures	Steelwork	t	3,600
	In-situ concrete	m ³	110
Safety Barrier	Steel	m	6,405
Fencing	Timber	m	6,289
Earthworks	Imported	m ³	339,359
	Site-won	m ³	108,844
	Pulverised Fly Ash (PFA) (within dry grout mix)	m ³	838
	Portland Cement (within dry grout mix)	m ³	419
Road Pavement	Sub-base	m ³	19,409
	Base (depth 220 or 180mm)	m ²	77,636
	Binder (depth 100mm)	m ²	77,636
	Surface (depth 40mm)	m ²	77,636
	Kerbs	m	7,213
	Tack coat	m ²	155,273
	Road markings	m	14,935
Road Lighting	Road studs	units	877
	Lighting units – new	units	30
	Lighting units – reused	units	90
	Steel columns	units	20
	Passively safe columns	units	80

Appendix 6 – Estimated Waste Quantities

Table 17-10 Estimated construction waste quantities

Project Element	Material	Approximate Estimated Material Quantity (m ³)	Density (tonnes/m ³) ⁽¹⁾	Approximate Estimated Material Quantity (tonnes)	Wastage Rate (%) ⁽²⁾	Waste Classification	Approximate Estimated Waste (tonnes)	Potential Waste Management Route	Potential Recovery Rate (% by weight) ⁽³⁾	Recovery (tonnes)
Civil Engineering Structures	Steelwork	n/a	n/a	3,600	5.0	Non-hazardous	180	Offsite recycling	100	180
	In-situ concrete	110	2.4	264	2.5	Non-hazardous	7	Offsite recycling	95	6
Materials for earthworks	Pulverised Fuel Ash (PFA) (within dry grout mix)	838	1.8	1,508	5.0	Non-hazardous	75	Offsite recycling	95	72
	Portland Cement (within dry grout mix)	419	2.4	1,006	5.0	Non-hazardous	50	Offsite recycling	95	48
Road Pavement	Sub-base (aggregate)	19,409	1.9	36,877	5.0	Non-hazardous	1,844	Offsite recycling	95	1,752
	Base course (asphalt)	15,511	2.4	37,227	2.5	Non-hazardous	931	Offsite recycling	95	884
	Binder course (asphalt)	7,764	2.4	18,633	2.5	Non-hazardous	466	Offsite recycling	95	443
	Surface course (asphalt)	3,105	2.4	7,453	2.5	Non-hazardous	186	Offsite recycling	95	177
Total wastage (tonnes)							3,739	Total potential non-hazardous recovery rate	95	3,561

Appendix 7 – Annual and remaining capacity of local landfill sites

Table 17-6 Annual and remaining capacity of operational landfills (inert and non-hazardous) in the SESplan Area, and hazardous landfill in Scotland

	Site Name	Annual Capacity on Permit (tonnes)	Total Tonnes Landfilled for Year (2018)	Remaining Capacity as at 31 December 2018 (tonnes)	Estimated Year of Landfill Closure
SESplan Area					
Non-Hazardous					
East Lothian	Viridor Waste, Dunbar	500,000	204,469	3,384,000	2020
Midlothian	Drummond Moor (No2) Landfill	250,000	147,854	1,454,256	2025
Scottish Borders	Easter Langlee Landfill	170,000	51,124	360,329	2020
West Lothian	Levenseat Waste Management Site	400,000	65,668	475,000	2051
Fife (south)	Lochhead L/F, By Wellwood	382,500	126,120	616,350	2022
	TOTAL	1,702,500	595,235	6,289,935	