

KilliecrAnkie1689

4 May 2018

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND CAN BY-PASS BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION

KilliecrAnkie1689, the group campaigning for a fair review of the route and design of the plans to dual the A9 over the Killiecrankie battlefield, accuse Transport Scotland of running an expensive charade after it became apparent that Transport Scotland can by-pass all the battlefield protection that is in place.

“The process has been flawed from the start,” says George MacLean of KilliecrAnkie1689. “The area of the designated battlefield should have been central to the plan so that the sensitive part of it is not damaged. In spite of most of the objections relating to the battlefield, Transport Scotland may get the green light anyway without much scrutiny.”

It was revealed this week that Transport Scotland received 183 objections to the Killiecrankie to Glen Garry section of the A9 project. “At first, Transport Scotland refused to tell us how many objections had been received but now, 14 weeks after the objection period closed, they confirm the number,” says George MacLean.

In contrast, there were 13 objections to the more southern section of road from Pitlochry to Killiecrankie which does not encroach on the battlefield.

Campaigners fear that Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Minister for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, actually revealed the lamentable truth about the Killiecrankie battlefield in Holyrood last week. In reply to a question about ensuring that historic battlefields are preserved, she said that the impact of a proposed development on an Inventory battlefield is a material consideration

within the planning system. However, she went on to explain that the A9 project at Killiecrankie is not within the planning system.

Murdo Fraser, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, labels historic battlefield protections “worthless” if the Scottish Government rubber stamps the current proposal for the A9 on the Killiecrankie site.

“ It is clear that only SNP Ministers can prevent the Killiecrankie battlefield from being built upon and they should respect the views of nearly 200 members of the public who have formally objected to this proposal. Other, less invasive, route options exist and it would be scandalous if these were not given full consideration. Ultimately, the planning system will be rendered unfit for purpose if clear objections from the likes of Historic Environment Scotland are ignored in relation to the battlefield at Killiecrankie,” he adds.

Of all the objections, the most heavyweight came from Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the national agency charged with protecting and enhancing Scotland’s cultural heritage. Crucially, it maintains the Inventory of Historic Battlefields which includes the Killiecrankie site. Measured against this document, HES found the plans for the A9 at Killiecrankie unacceptable.

In its objection, HES highlights gaps in Transport Scotland’s assessment methodology, a possible bias in the collection of data and a likelihood of reaching an unbalanced assessment of the significance and impact of the proposal. HES says that far too little research and fieldwork has been done on archaeological and physical remains relating to the battle and that Transport Scotland has not understood the relevance or importance of the battlefield’s topography and landscape.

Transport Scotland is now considering what extra metal detecting, geophysical studies and trial trench work needs to be done to satisfy HES’s demands. Exactly who will be responsible for archaeology studies still seems moot.

If Transport Scotland cannot resolve HES’s objection or any other objection of similar importance, a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) may be held which will be

overseen by an independent Reporter. However, as the A9 in Killiecrankie is not within the planning system, it is the Scottish Ministers, ultimately, who will decide.

They are under no obligation to accept the outcome of any PLI. Transport Scotland has already indicated that there is provision within the timetable for an inquiry and campaigners fear that the whole laborious, time-consuming and hugely expensive process has been a sham. "The cosy relationship between Transport Scotland and the Scottish Ministers could threaten the chances of arriving at the optimum plan to preserve what is left of the integrity of the Killiecrankie battle site," says George MacLean of KilliecrAnkie1689.

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1 Information on the A9 project Killiecrankie to Glen Garry, including the Environmental Statement and draft Road Orders, is available on Transport Scotland's website: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/projects/a9-dualling-perth-to-inverness/a9-killiecrankie-to-glen-garry/>

2 Objections to Transport Scotland's A9 plan at Killiecrankie have been submitted by Historic Environment Scotland, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Perth and Kinross Council, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Killiecrankie and Fincastle Community Council, heritage groups, historians and KilliecrAnkie1689.

3 The Battle of Killiecrankie was fought on 27 July, 1689. The Jacobite battle line was drawn on the hill that overlooks the A9 at Killiecrankie. They were led by John Graham of Claverhouse, Bonnie Dundee, who was killed in action. The Government battle line was formed just south of the existing A9. The Government troops were led by General Hugh Mackay. The 2 sides clashed in the very area that is proposed for road-widening. It is estimated that fatalities totalled over 2,000. More died at Killiecrankie than at the Battle of Culloden in 1746 when the Jacobite revolt ended.

4 Historic Environment Scotland's website hosts information about Killiecrankie's designation on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields here <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/BTL12>

5. The map on the Inventory showing battle lines and the location of the existing A9 is particularly useful. The fighting was concentrated in the area between the line of the road and the red line denoting the Government army. This happens to be the exact area that will be destroyed by the proposed A9 plan. Many features within that area are listed in the Inventory. <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/document/600016653> Scroll to last map called "Deployments".

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