

News release

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£1.3bn Queensferry Crossing managed effectively

Transport Scotland's management of the Forth Replacement Crossing project delivered value for money but a clearer plan is needed to measure its wider benefits, says a new report.

Auditor General Caroline Gardner found that the £1.34bn infrastructure scheme – which cost at least £110m less than expected - was managed effectively.

Her report praises Transport Scotland's budgeting, governance, quality assurance and risk management - as well as the competitive tendering which helped deliver the project under budget.

A key factor behind the project's success was that the delivery team had the right mix of skills and experience. They demonstrated strong, consistent leadership, and communicated well with contractors and stakeholder groups.

The government identified a clear need for the bridge, and demonstrated that the preferred option - a cable-stayed bridge - had several advantages over other options and designs.

It is too early for some of the project's wider benefits - such as improving public transport across the Forth, cutting journey times, and boosting economic growth - to be demonstrated. But more detail is needed on how success will be measured.

Ms Gardner said: "There is much the public sector can learn from the way Transport Scotland managed the project and it's important that the good practice is shared more widely.

"The management of the project delivered value for money and achieved its overall aim of maintaining a reliable road link between Fife and the Lothians.

"Transport Scotland now needs to produce a clearer plan about how it will measure the success of the project's wider benefits, including its contribution to economic growth and improved public transport links."

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Notes to editors:

1. The final cost of the project was £1.34 billion - around 8-16 per cent less than the £1.45-£1.6 billion estimated at the start of construction.
2. The new crossing opened on 30 August 2017. Due to bad weather, this was eight months later than first estimated and ten weeks later than the mid-June contract completion date.
3. Transport Scotland has a plan for evaluating progress towards achieving the FRC project's objectives and is due to carry out a full post-project evaluation in late 2018.

4. There were four main elements to the ten-year project: Queensferry Crossing, M9 Junction 1a, Fife Intelligent Transport System (ITS) and the Contact and Education Centre.
5. 13.7 miles (22km) long - the overall project includes major motorway upgrades to the north and south of the bridge.
6. The project features the first use of ITS in Scotland – an automated system to vary mandatory speed limits and smooth traffic congestion
7. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

* The Auditor General appoints auditors to Scotland's central government and NHS bodies; examines how public bodies spend public money; helps them to manage their finances to the highest standards; and checks whether they achieve value for money. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament

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