

**REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE 03 FEBRUARY 2009**

**SUBJECT: ELGIN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT – REPORT 1**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update to Committee on matters affecting Elgin Traffic Management. A separate report on the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) is presented to this Committee.
- 1.2 To set out the general background for the related report (Elgin Traffic Management – Report 2) to this Committee.
- 1.3 To seek approval for the preparation and award of a new Framework Agreement to enable projects within the scope of Elgin Traffic Management to be taken forward.
- 1.4 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the function of the Council as Roads Authority including safety, the detailed planning, design and construction, improvement, maintenance and lighting of roads, bridges and other structures.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **The Committee is invited to note the contents of this report.**
- 2.2 **The Committee is invited to delegate the Director of Environmental Services to prepare and award a new Framework Agreement for transportation and design services.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In November 2002 a petition for 'A96 Improvements (Elgin Bypass)' was submitted to the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee. Since then a number of studies were carried out in relation to an Elgin Bypass. The HITRANS A96 Bypasses Economic Appraisal Study was reported to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 17 June 2008.
- 3.2 The Strategic Transport Projects Review was published in December 2008. The STPR and the matter of an Elgin Bypass is covered by a separate report submitted to this Committee. It should be noted that in light of the outcome of

the STPR, then there may be a knock-on effect on much of the local network through gradual displacement of trips from the A96 to alternative/parallel local road routes.

- 3.3 Since September 2004 there have been a series of reports to Committees concerning the preparation of an Elgin Traffic Model and a STAG Report. The full list of reports is attached at **Appendix A**.  
Note: Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) is the method of appraisal for transport policies and projects throughout Scotland.
- 3.4 The Elgin STAG Study key objective, 'to provide a quicker, safer and more reliable transport system in and around Elgin while accommodating future development', was identified by stakeholders and adopted for the Study.
- 3.5 The Elgin Community Council was one of the stakeholders who were involved in the preparation of the Elgin STAG objectives. They have strongly advocated improvements to the road network in Elgin.
- 3.6 Five transport themes were identified in the Elgin STAG Study process. From these themes seven options were taken forward to the Elgin STAG Part 2 appraisal. The Environmental Services Committee on 30 August 2007 (para 5 of the Minute refers) approved officers to proceed with detailed design work for two options from the seven that were considered in the Elgin STAG Part 2 Report. A separate report (Elgin Traffic Management – Report 2) concerning the findings of work carried out for the two options is presented separately to this Committee.
- 3.7 In the preparation of the Elgin STAG Reports and the Elgin Traffic Model account was taken of the prevailing policies, strategies, committed infrastructure and approved developments. Since the publication of the Elgin STAG Part 2 Report there have been some significant updates and changes at national, regional and local level. The details of these are noted in the table at **Appendix B**. The next two paragraphs highlight some of the notable policy, strategy and legislation changes since 2006.
- 3.8 In terms of Transport policies, strategies and studies these include the publication of the National Transport Strategy; HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy; a number of studies concerning the A96(T); Moray Road Safety Plan 2008-2011; and the Strategic Transport Projects Review.
- 3.9 Other policies and strategies that have a bearing on Elgin Traffic Management include: The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2006; Moray Local Plan (2008); Moray Council Priorities for 2008-2011; Moray Council Single Outcome Agreement.
- 3.10 The current traffic situation in Elgin is one of increasing congestion at a number of locations at particular times of the day. Recent transport assessments received in connection with major development applications show capacity/delay problems at specific junctions in Elgin. River crossings, and more particularly rail crossings, are responsible for only some of the

constraints on the road network, but they tend to be critical for future development as well as a major source of existing problems. The existing rail crossings in the town are all inadequate in different ways and most have very limited scope for on-site improvement.

3.11 A series of TSP measures have been identified in the Moray Local Plan that cover strategic transport improvement options (including possible Bypass lines), individual junctions that will require improvements in relation to designated land uses, railway sidings, bus station, and strategic cycling network routes.

3.12 The levels of traffic flows on various road links in Elgin are monitored through a set of permanent traffic count sites and additional temporary traffic surveys. The average 24 hour 2-way traffic flow for the A941 railway crossing is 22,470 and this peaked, just before Christmas 2009, at 27,290 vehicles. The typical 24 hour 2-way traffic flow on the A96 at Alexandra Road is 23,650.

3.13 The original Elgin Traffic Model (base 2006) used traffic data collated in late 2005 and early 2006. Recognising there would be an impact on normal traffic flows due to the closure of Reiket Lane a series of junction surveys were carried out during summer 2008. These surveys reveal the following levels of traffic passing through these key junctions on the A941 in their respective busiest PM peak hour:

<u>Junction</u>	<u>PM period</u>	<u>Movements</u>
New Elgin Road/Edgar Road Roundabout	1630:1730	(2612)
New Elgin Road/Station Road Roundabout	1630:1730	(2285)
North Street/Morrison Road Priority Junction	1645:1745	(1487)

3.14 During the period between 2006 to 2009 a number of 'major developments' were given planning consent and some have now become operational:

Aldi Store (Trinity Place)  
 Mezzanine floor extension at Tesco Store (Alexandra Road)  
 Lidl Store (Station Road)  
 Extension to Walkers Factory (Edgar Road)  
 Johnstons Cashmere Visitor Centre (Newmill Road)  
 Mezzanine floor extension at Asda Store (Edgar Road)  
 R11 Waulkmill (Reiket Lane)  
 R14 Thornhill (Thornhill Road)  
 R9 Bilbohall North (Mayne Farm Road)  
 Community facilities at CF4 Thornhill Field (Thornhill Road)  
 60 residential units at former Pinefield Community Centre (Pinefield Road)  
 Waulkmill phase 2 (Reiket Lane)  
 Garden Centre (Sheriffmill Road)

3.15 There are developer contributions, associated with some of the above developments, towards network infrastructure improvements related to the impact of each development. There are specific dates set out in legal agreements when these funds have to be spent.

- 3.16 There are a number of major planning applications in the pipeline that are being evaluated for their impact on the road network and consideration of mitigation measures associated with these developments.
- 3.17 The Council and Community Planning Partners have a number of projects in Elgin that will require an assessment of their traffic impact. This includes housing, sports, health, education and transport related projects. Pre-application advice and information has already been provided to some of the Community Planning Partner organisations.
- 3.18 Whilst some long term vacant posts within Transportation and Consultancy have recently been filled there remain two long term vacant posts that would contribute some project management and design support to Elgin Traffic Management projects.
- 3.19 The current Transportation Call-off Contract with Halcrow is due to expire at the end of March 2009. However, like many other term contracts operated by public sector clients, there is an arrangement for an extension for a period of up to 12 months.
- 3.20 Elgin Traffic Management projects will have to be taken forward in accordance with procedures, regulations and relevant legislation. There will in many cases be a requirement for the identification of all known constraints, surveys (including ground investigations), consultations with stakeholders, discussions with landowner(s), preparation of project management proposals and detailed designs.
- 3.21 Due to the requirement for Elgin Traffic Management projects to proceed through statutory procedures and to be progressed to tender stages there is a requirement to acquire transportation and design services from consultants. This is not only to supplement existing resources and capabilities within the Council but to provide specialist support, such as traffic modelling, environmental assessment, economic evaluation, etc.
- 3.22 There will have to be a new Framework Agreement to replace the Call-off Term contract. The Committee is requested to approve the preparation and award of a new Framework Agreement that will enable all aspects required to efficiently prepare and deliver Elgin Traffic Management projects.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

**This report contributes to:**

**CDP Environmental Programme 4 Transport**

**Provide suitable transport and other infrastructure to help the local economy**

**SIP Improving Transport Infrastructure**

- (b) **Policy and Legal**  
This report takes account of:  
**Moray Local Plan (2008)**  
**Regional Transport Strategy**  
**SPP17 Planning for Transport**  
**Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)**  
Elgin Traffic Management projects will be required to comply with statutory procedures.
- (c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**  
Funding for the preparation of a new Framework Agreement will be met from the 'Elgin Traffic Management & Car Parking'. Economic evaluation of Elgin Traffic Management projects will be required. The procurement of a new Framework Agreement will have to be in accordance with EU Regulations and the associated mandatory timescales (Open Procedure without Prior Information/Indicative Notice - minimum of 52 days from issue of invitation to tender to receipt of tender response). Developer contributions already secured must be spent by specified deadlines.  
There are still a small number of vacant posts in Transportation and Consultancy.  
To achieve the Elgin STAG key objective will require land and may also require property.
- (d) **Consultations**  
The Development Management Manager, Planning & Development Manager, Principal Accountant, and Principal Solicitor (Commercial & Conveyancing) have been consulted. Comments received have been incorporated in this report.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 There is a need to work towards the Elgin STAG key objective 'to provide a quicker, safer and more reliable transport system in and around Elgin while accomodating future development'.
- 5.2 Five transport themes were identified in the Elgin STAG Study process and from these themes seven options were taken forward to the Elgin STAG Part 2 appraisal. The Environmental Services Committee on 30 August 2007 approved officers to proceed with detailed design work for two of the seven options. The Elgin Traffic Management – Report 2 covers the work taken forward in relation to the two options.
- 5.3 The prevailing traffic situation in Elgin does not reflect the increasing amount of developments that have been granted planning consent but have not yet become operational. Recent transport assessments received in connection with major development applications show capacity/delay problems at specific junctions in Elgin.

- 5.4 Given the requirement for Elgin Traffic Management projects to proceed through statutory procedures and to be progressed to tender stages there is a requirement to acquire transportation and design services. A new Framework Agreement will replace the current Call-off Term Contract and enable all aspects required to efficiently deliver Elgin Traffic Management projects to be put in place

Author of Report:

Background Papers: Reports to Committee – see **Appendix A**

Ref: