

REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 14 DECEMBER 2010

SUBJECT: ELGIN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT: WESTERN DISTRIBUTOR ROAD OPTION APPRAISAL

BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the current progress on the Western Distributor Road (WDR) option appraisal and of the proposals to engage in a public consultation exercise on the options.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section G(18) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to dealing with the preparation and implementation of traffic management schemes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee note the progress on the Option Appraisal and approve the details presented for public consultation.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Reference is made to the reports to this Committee on 15 June 2010 (Para 4 of the minute refers) and on 19 October 2010 (Para 15 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 The consultants have developed the option appraisal report since the last Committee and the study is now almost complete.
- 3.3 The Draft Stage 2 Report is summarised in **Appendix A**. Copies of the full report have been placed in the Members Library and can also be found on the Elected Members Information Portal. The consultants will present the details of the options at this meeting and a copy will be placed on the Council's website thereafter.
- 3.4 There are significant cost estimate differentials between the routes with the four options falling into two price bracket zones:

Inner routes: Less than £15M
Outer routes: in the range £25M - £70M
- 3.5 In the current financial climate it is difficult to perceive all options passing an affordability test but it is important to demonstrate to the community that all options have been explored. In addition to this being necessary for any future scrutiny or potential public inquiry, it confirms the previous committee decisions to consider and consult on all options presented to Members at the previous Committee meetings.

- 3.6 It is proposed that all options are included in the planned public exhibition and consultation exercise which will form the final Stage 2 appraisal.
- 3.7 The draft report will then be updated following the feedback from the public consultation exercise and the final report to Members will assess the options and provide a recommendation based on the objective evaluation.

4. COMMUNICATION, CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC EXHIBITION

- 4.1 These staged reports are now at a point where there is a need to present the options to the public. The outline of this proposed consultation will be presented at this Committee.
- 4.2 A public exhibition is planned for 27th and 28th January 2011 in the Gallery at Elgin Library.
- 4.3 An opportunity will be available for comments and feedback from the public to be submitted either on the day or soon after the exhibition; however a one week deadline for the return of feedback will be set to ensure that analysis can be carried out and conclusions from the process can be incorporated into the final report.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/ Service Improvement Plan

- (i) **This report is in line with National Outcome 1 and Local Outcome 3: “Moray will benefit from an improved and safer transportation infrastructure”.**
- (ii) **Service Priority 2 (Elgin Traffic Management Plan) of the Service Improvement Plan.**

(b) Policy and Legal

None at this stage.

(c) Financial implications

Capital budget for 2010/11 has been approved however specific budget requirements for subsequent stages can only be determined at the end of the option appraisal process, and is subject to further financial approval.

Eliminating options at this stage will not result in a reduction in fees since the majority of the appraisal work has now been done.

(d) Risk Implications

Adverse reaction to the options under consideration is likely based on previous experience.

There is a significant amount of work in analysing the response to a consultation, and the reporting to the March meeting may not be possible.

Elimination of options prior to consultation would prejudice the impartial development of the preferred option case.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities

There are no issues in this case.

(h) Consultations

The Elgin South West Working Group reviewed the consultant's Draft Stage 2 Report and the public consultation proposals and supported continuing the process previously set out.

Lorraine Paisey, Principal Accountant, has been consulted on this report and has no comment.

Alasdair McEachan, Principal Solicitor, has been consulted on this report and has no comment.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The consultant's Stage 2 report has developed the options, providing more detail than in the earlier stage, and soon will require public scrutiny through consultation on all the options to conclude this part of the process.

6.2 This public feedback will further inform the objective appraisal of the options under consideration so that with further sifting, a decision on a preferred option can be made allowing progression to Stage 3 – detailed design.

6.3 It is anticipated that it will be possible to report the findings of the consultation to the next meeting of this Committee on 8th March 2011, depending on the amount of analysis that is required.

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Background Papers:
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