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| To: BELLSHILL AREA COMMITTEE               |                  | Subject: BELLSHILL TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN |
| From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT |                  |  |
| Date: 24 March 2005                        | Ref: HQ/TT/03/14 |  |

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of the Bellshill Town Centre Action Plan

## 2. Background

- 2.1 On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2003, authority was granted by the Economic Regeneration Committee for the Director of Planning and Environment to undertake inter alia, the detailed design of roundabouts at Belgrave Street, Glebe Street and North Road, being the first stage of the Bellshill Town Centre Action Plan.
- 2.2 Preliminary design work was commenced by the Department's in-house design team, which included initial liaison with public utilities, costings and programming for the works. After several months preparatory work it became obvious that the project could not be resourced by the in-house team and a decision was taken to prepare a consultants brief and seek tenders to take the phase 1 works through detailed design to completion. The brief was issued on 30 January 2004 with a return date of 5 March.
- 2.3 On 5 February 2004, the Director of Planning and Environment gave a presentation to Bellshill Area Committee explaining the background and estimated timescales for the phase 1 works, including the construction of the three roundabouts at a cost of £2,544,000. Further phases for the Hamilton Road/Crossgates junction would then follow. The timescales given at the presentation for a site start in December 2004 were optimistic and were based on meeting early committee dates and encountering few design problems.
- 2.4 The tenders submitted in regard to the design and procurement of the proposed works were checked following their opening on 5 March with the intention of placing a committee report before the Economic Regeneration Committee on 16 March 2004. This tender issue had been carried out simultaneously with a similar contract for the procurement of design services for Wishaw Town Centre works, the same consultants having tendered for both. Halcrows Group Ltd. submitted the lowest tenders for both projects, their price being well below the other tenderers but did not apparently including for site supervision. Halcrows also offered a further reduction in cost of £3,000 if they were awarded both tenders.

- 2.5 Given the significant tender price difference between Halcrows and the other tenderers and the concern that they had not priced for site supervision, discussions were undertaken with Halcrows and the other tenderers to ensure that they had correctly priced all the works defined in the brief. This ensured that fairness and best value was being obtained in the tender process. Despite this process there was some misgivings that Halcrows had not correctly priced the contract and the Director of Administration was consulted. The advice received was that there was no legal justification for not appointing the lowest tender and a committee report was subsequently prepared recommending acceptance of the Halcrows tender.
- 2.6 Unfortunately, this process delayed the report and meant that the committee date of 16 March was not met. The report was submitted to the next available Economic Regeneration Committee on 25 May 2004, which accepted of the tender submitted by the Halcrows Group. The letter appointing Halcrow was issued on 15 June and the first project inception meeting was held on 29 June 2004, two months behind the timescale indicated by the Director in his presentation on 5 February 2004.
- 2.7 Since the design commenced in July 2004, the consultant has not achieved the desired progress despite continuing management and prompting by this department. The initial designs carried out by Halcrows have had to be amended on a number of occasions resulting, in some instances, to a change in land requirements. In addition, the consultant has been slow to carry out the necessary traffic surveys, which are required to finalise the junction designs. These problems have resulted in further delays to the project.
- 2.8 One particular problem encountered was the scale of the roundabout required to provide the desired traffic capacity at North Road/Gartcosh Walk junction. The proposed design required a roundabout in excess of 60 metres in diameter which, with widened approaches, extended into land outwith the control of the Council and affected the existing underpass with a resultant rise in costs. A number of designs have been tried with limited success and at present traffic signals or a signalised roundabout are under consideration. Similarly the Glebe St/Hamilton Rd/Neilson Street roundabout is proving difficult to configure and alternatives are being considered at this location, which will have to be linked to the junctions on either side. If traffic signals are considered to be the preferred option, the installation time will be considerably shorter than with a roundabout construction.
- 2.9 In order to minimise the delays caused by the redesign process, a decision was taken to concentrate on designing the Belgrave Street roundabout in isolation, particularly as this junction has to be treated first to ease the traffic impact on the other junctions. Detailed plans have been prepared and a planning application for this junction and the associated lengths of realigned and new roads has been lodged. In the meantime, Halcrows are preparing the contract documents, which will be issued when planning approval is granted. In addition, they are continuing to liaise with the public utility companies in order to try and commence any public utility works in advance of the main contract. However, as the planning application for the junction would have to be referred to the Scottish Executive in the event of objections being received to the application, it would not be prudent to commit expenditure in advance of planning approval. It is unlikely therefore that the main contract works would commence before June 2005.

- 2.10 On a more positive note, and building on the traffic management works, the Planning and Environment Department are commissioning an Urban Design/Public Realm Masterplan covering the town centre of Bellshill with a view to enhancing the physical environment and improving pedestrian areas. This will identify a range of works and schemes which will be delivered after a public consultation exercise with a view to substantial works taking place shortly thereafter. This will be funded through the town centre programme which looks to deliver the Council's commitment to Town Centres and act as a means of leveraging financial commitments from partner agencies such as Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire and the private sector.
- 2.11 In advance of the Masterplan, the first phase of the pedestrian improvements is currently being delivered with an upgrade to the lighting, safety and appearance of the underpass at Emma Jay Road, linking the town centre to Hattonrigg. It is intended that this is the first of many capital works in Bellshill which will enhance the quality of the environment, and the access from neighbouring areas, and ultimately secure the long term viability of the businesses that operate in the Town Centre.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Committee are asked to note:
- a) The reasons for delay in the project.
  - b) The efforts being made to overcome design difficulties and speed up the project.
  - c) The commitment to complete phase 1 works in the 2005/06 year.
  - d) The commissioning of a masterplan to improve pedestrian areas and environment.



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(15 March 2005)

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Tom Peebles on 01236 616406.