

**REPORT TO: SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
15 JUNE 2006**

**SUBJECT: ELGIN TRANSPORT MODEL AND STAG STUDY REPORT :  
UPDATE**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**1. Reason for Report**

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update for the Elgin Transport Model and the STAG Study.
- 1.2 To invite the Committee to consider holding a special meeting to receive a presentation on the Elgin Transport Model.
- 1.3 To seek approval for Consultants to continue with the preparation of the STAG 1 Report based on an amended brief and for the preparation of an evaluation of any cost implications for the STAG 2 Study. The STAG 1 Report and evaluation of time and cost implications will be reported to a future Committee meeting.
- 1.4 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (13) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the functions of the Council as Roads Authority.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 On 1 September 2004 the Environmental Services Committee approved that a traffic model for Elgin should be prepared and following on from that to commission a STAG Report ( para 8 refers).
- 2.2 On 1 July 2005 the Special Environmental Services Committee agreed that the Consultative Draft Moray Structure Plan Review, the Development Plan Report of Survey and the Consultative Draft Local Plan Review should be used as a basis for public consultation subject to the noted amendments raised at the meeting (para 4 refers).

- 2.3 The Moray Council at its meeting on 09 November 2005 agreed to delegate to the Director of Environmental Services the task of preparing a 'Brief' to carry out a full and proper STAG Report without any pre-conditions for the transport network options in Elgin West (para 27 refers).
- 2.4 The Environmental Services Committee at its meeting on 01 February 2006 (para 4 refers) approved the appointment of Halcrow Group Ltd for the Transportation Professional Services Call-off Term contract including the Transport Model and STAG Report tasks.
- 2.5 The Environmental Services Committee at its meeting on 01 March 2006 (para 24 refers) were informed that roadside interview surveys would be carried out prior to the Easter school holidays and a STAG Study workshop would be held on 22 March. Elected Members were issued with a questionnaire prior to the workshop allowing them to contribute to the pre-appraisal process.
- 2.6 At the meeting of the Environmental Services Committee on 24 May 2006 (para 12 (ii) of the Minute refers) it was agreed to note that the Elgin Traffic Model is on programme and that an update report on the Elgin STAG report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

### **3. Situation Update**

#### **3.1 Transport Model**

- 3.1.1 Through the procurement process a Consultant and a traffic micro-simulation modelling system were chosen. Halcrow Consultant is using the VISSIM modelling system that has a number of key strengths including modelling and visual representation of individual vehicles together with a comprehensive range of model outputs.
- 3.1.2 All traffic models have significant data requirements. In the case of micro-simulation models, there is potentially a greater amount of data needed to understand and replicate existing travel behaviour. The data can be split into two categories: Static and Dynamic. Static data includes link data, lane usage, priority rules, bus routes, bus frequencies, traffic signal stop lines, bus stop locations, and bus stop layouts. Dynamic data includes turning movements, traffic volumes, signal timings, traffic composition, bus dwell times, and pedestrian crossing flows. This data is being compiled from various sources and through a number of different surveys.
- 3.1.3 Halcrow will provide three Base Models: Weekday AM Peak, Weekday PM Peak and Weekend Peak. In addition a number of Scenario Models will be prepared as part of the work associated with Call-Off Task 2 STAG Study
- 3.1.4 Roadside Interview Surveys were successfully carried out between 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006 through close liaison between the Survey Company, Police, and BEAR Scotland. One written complaint was received.

3.1.5 Summary traffic flow data for each of the roadside interview sites is attached at **Appendix A**.

3.1.6 The Committee is invited to note the situation and consider holding a special meeting to receive a presentation on the Elgin Transport Model.

### 3.2 STAG Study

3.2.1 The Pre-Appraisal Workshop was held on 22 March. The inputs and outputs from the workshop include a number of written submissions by Elected Members. A record of the Pre-Appraisal Workshop has been issued to invitees and a copy is attached at **Appendix B**.

3.2.2 The record reports the following:

*“Participants questioned why the whole of Elgin was not to be considered within this study brief. After clarification about the instruction by the Environmental Services Committee to carry out a STAG Study for the proposed scheme to link Edgar Road to the A96 there was general discussion amongst the Group. The Group consensus was that the workshop should proceed and consider problems/issues, establish planning objectives and outline options (to be developed, sifted and appraised) for the whole of Elgin”.*

3.2.3 While the Director of Environmental Services agrees with this course of action it must be pointed out that widening of the scope will have consequences for the STAG Study. These include the delivery timetable and costs. The Consultant has reported that they estimate the delivery schedule is now likely to be late June for the STAG 1 Report on this revised brief and late September for the presentation of the STAG 2 Study. This is very much dependent on availability of consultees and the range of options that are to be taken forward for appraisal in the STAG 2 process. Any cost implications will not become clear until after the completion of the STAG 1 Report.

3.2.4 The level of any additional costs will be evaluated during the period of the preparation of the STAG 1 Report and submitted to Committee at the same time as the STAG 1 Report.

3.2.5 Even though the scope of the Pre-Appraisal Workshop was widened by the Group it should be noted that the extension of Edgar Road to A96 and new railway crossings are included in the range of potential options identified by the participants through the pre-appraisal process. The next stage will involve a qualitative assessment of the impact of the options against the planning objectives of the study as well as the Government’s 5 objectives for transport i.e. economy, environment, safety, integration and accessibility/social inclusion. The aim of this stage is to arrive at a manageable number of options to be taken forward to the Part 2 appraisal.

3.2.6 The Committee is invited to note the situation regarding the STAG Study and to note that no options are being ruled out at this stage.

3.2.7 The Consultants will continue with the preparation of the STAG 1 Report based on the amended brief and for the preparation of an evaluation of any cost implications for the STAG 2 Study. The STAG 1 Report and evaluation of cost implications will be reported to a future Committee.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no additional costs at this stage however an evaluation of any cost implications of the widening of the scope of the Pre-Appraisal Workshop will be carried out in tandem with the STAG 1 Study process and will be reported to a future Committee. At this stage it is envisaged that any additional costs can be contained within the existing Capital Budget – Car Parking and Traffic Management in Elgin for 2006/07.

#### **5. Staffing Implications**

5.1 Transportation staff and Development Services staff are involved in providing data to the Consultants carrying out the STAG Report and Transport Model tasks but this is carried out within existing staffing levels.

#### **6. Environmental Implications**

6.1 An important element of the STAG Study covers the environmental aspect of the transport scheme options

#### **7. Sustainable Development Implications**

7.1 The overall aim of proposed transport network improvement schemes is to ensure the economic viability and sustainability of Elgin. There may be some environmental and social mitigation measures to be considered and implemented where required.

#### **8. Consultations**

8.1 Throughout the STAG process there is a requirement for consultation. The Stakeholder Group, involved in the Pre-Appraisal Workshop, includes Elected Members, Community Planning representatives, and representatives from community organisations. The proposed STAG process is outlined in Appendix B.

8.2 The Principal Solicitor (Commercial and Conveyancing) has been consulted and their comments incorporated in this report.

8.3 The Planning and Development Manager agrees with the content of the report and states, "the changes in timescale affect the ability of the Finalised Local Plan to reflect the preferred proposals. The Finalised Plan will state that the Study is

ongoing, and will identify those junctions and routes that are aimed at resolving Elgin's traffic issues."

8.4 The Principal Accountant has been consulted and agrees with the financial implications contained within the report.

## **9. Corporate Plan**

9.1 The report encompasses the main aims of the Economic Development programme by maintaining and enhancing suitable transport facilities and infrastructure for residents, visitors, businesses and workers.

## **10. Recommendations**

**10.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to:-**

- (i) note the situation update for the Transport Model and the STAG Study Report tasks;**
- (ii) consider holding a special meeting of the Committee to receive a presentation on the Elgin Transport Model; and**
- (iii) note that the Consultants will continue with the preparation of the STAG 1 Report based on the amended brief and for the preparation of an evaluation of any cost implications for the STAG 2 Study. The STAG 1 Report and evaluation of cost implications will be reported to a future Committee.**

Author of Report: Director of Environmental Services  
Background Papers: Reports to Environmental Services Committee  
01 September 2004, 15 June 2005, 16 November 2005,  
01 February 2006, 01 March 2006  
Reports to Special Environmental Services Committee  
01 July 2005  
Reports to The Moray Council  
09 November 2005

Ref: R/66/24/1