

Introduction

The Director of City Development will report to the City of Edinburgh Council of 13 March 2008 recommending that the lowest tender received for the above scheme is accepted. The lowest tender was submitted by Barr Ltd and its value is approximately £1.75 million.

Previous Committee Reports Concerning this Scheme

The Executive of the Council authorised the Director of City Development to proceed with a bid for funding available through the Scottish Executive's Public Transport Fund, for projects identified by this Council (including the scheme for Seafield Roundabout), on 18 June 2002. This report was subsequently called in to the City of Edinburgh Council, which approved the decision on 27 June 2002.

Progress with the applications was reported to the Executive of the Council on 27 August 2002. This report was subsequently called into The City of Edinburgh Council on 19 September 2002.

The final round of awards from the Scottish Executive's Public Transport Fund was announced in November 2002. Details were reported to the Executive of the Council on 14 January 2003. The Scottish Executive awarded the Council £10.5 million to take forward its proposals for Access to Growth Areas (ATGA). Additional funding from developer contributions also supports some of the schemes within the programme.

The ATGA programme covers three elements, bus priority, cycling and walking and bus stop infrastructure. Each element contains a number of individual schemes or works. One of the largest schemes forming part of the bus priority element is the scheme for Seafield Roundabout. Progress on this scheme was previously detailed in a report to the Executive of the Council on 25 October 2005.

The Scheme

The scheme involves replacing the existing roundabout at this location with a traffic signal controlled junction with pedestrian crossing phases on all approaches. The signals will be fitted with Selective Vehicle Detection (SVD) and Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) equipment.

In addition to the pedestrian crossings that will be installed on each approach to the new junction, a further pedestrian crossing will be provided on Portobello High Street in advance of the junction as part of the scheme. Peak period only bus lanes will also be installed on Portobello Road and Portobello High Street in the area of the junction.

A plan of the proposals is attached to this briefing note.

Scheme Aims

The scheme is intended to reduce delays that are being experienced by public transport serving and passing through the area during busy periods. The SVD apparatus that will be fitted to the new signals will allow the phasing at the junction to be altered to prioritise buses that are running behind schedule. The bus lanes on the junction approaches will allow all buses to bypass some of the queues and ensure that they can pass through the junction during the first available green phase.

The junction will also allow a more balanced operation for all traffic by enabling signal timings to be adjusted to suit traffic volumes on individual approaches and for different times of the day. The MOVA equipment that will be fitted to the new signals does this automatically in response to changes in traffic flows.

The scheme is similar in nature to the recently completed scheme that replaced the roundabout at Milton Link with a new junction. Lothian Buses have since confirmed that this scheme has resulted in significant benefits to their bus services that use the junction.

Traffic signal controlled junctions are also generally safer than roundabouts, especially for cyclists and motorcyclists who are particularly vulnerable at roundabouts. They allow pedestrian crossing facilities to be provided on the line of demand on all junction approaches, which is difficult to achieve at roundabouts. Advanced stop lines for cyclists will also be incorporated on appropriate junction approaches in line with Council policy.

There have been 18 personal injury accidents in the immediate vicinity of the roundabout during the last 5 year period, involving 20 casualties. Of these casualties, 4 were cyclists, 3 were motorcyclists and 2 were pedestrians. There was a fatality involving a cyclist at the roundabout in 2003. There have also been 3 serious injuries, all of which were to cyclists or motorcyclists. Further details of these accidents are attached to this briefing note.

Construction of Scheme

Once the Contract is awarded, the start date for construction work would be subject to agreement with the successful Contractor. It is expected that it would be a minimum of 6 weeks after the Contract award before the successful Contractor would be in a position to start work on site. The earliest that the roadworks could start is therefore likely to be mid May 2008, although the actual date may well be later than this. Construction is expected to take about 20 weeks to complete.

Mitigation of Effects of Roadworks

Due to the amount of traffic that passes through this area on a daily basis and the extensive nature of the works being carried out, it is inevitable that the roadworks will cause considerable disruption to motorists and to the local community. The following measures are being put in place to mitigate the effects of the roadworks:

Ongoing liaison with the Local Roads Manager from Services for Communities to minimise other roadworks in surrounding areas during the same period

Advanced publicity to warn motorists of the start of the roadworks and to encourage them to use alternative routes or methods of travel

- Press releases
- Adverts in local newspapers (Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian)
- Article in the Council's Outlook newspaper
- Distribution of approx. 10,000 information cards to residents and businesses in surrounding areas and also approx. 50 locations further afield
- Display posters to supplement information cards at outlying locations
- Agreement in principle obtained to display information in public buildings in East Lothian
- Information posted on the Council's website and CLARENCE weekly roadworks list
- Erection of fixed plate warning signs on all major approaches to the site sufficiently far in advance to allow traffic to take an alternative route
- Use of a mobile Variable Message Sign on A1 approach at Asda roundabout

Advanced notification and brief details of roadworks to be sent to

- Cllr Wheeler
- Cllrs Child, Bridgman, Hawkins (Portobello/Craigmillar)
- Cllrs Aitken, Peacock, Tymkewycz (Craigtinny/Duddingston)
- Cllrs Thomas, Munn, Munro (Leith)
- Cllrs Brock, Chapman, Blacklock, Lang (Leith Walk)
- Cllrs Hart, Murray, Buchanan, Snowden (Liberton/Gilmerton)
- Cllrs Rose, Burgess, Perry, MacKenzie (Southside/Newington)
- Kenny MacAskill MSP (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh)
- Malcolm Chisholm MSP (Edinburgh North and Leith)
- Mike Pringle MSP (Edinburgh South)
- Gavin Strang MP (Edinburgh East)
- Mark Lazarowicz MP (Edinburgh North and Leith)
- Nigel Griffiths MP (Edinburgh South)
- Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
- Community Councils in relevant areas
- Various others e.g. known residents and business groups, Forth Ports, Taxi Drivers Federation etc.
- Providers of route planning information e.g. AA, RAC etc.

Measures to be put in place during roadworks

- Queue monitoring and distribution of up to date delay information to radio stations, AA Roadwatch etc.
- Provision of recovery vehicles on site to remove broken down vehicles
- Use of semi-permanent traffic signals and a permanent traffic signals controller rather than temporary traffic signals (offers increased reliability and greater flexibility of signals phasing)
- Where possible, alterations to signals phasings at critical junctions in surrounding areas to assist traffic taking alternative routes

ROAD SAFETY, BUS AND PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY SCHEME, SEAFIELD ROUNDABOUT
BRIEFING NOTE FOR WARD COUNCILLORS

- Remote monitoring equipment to be installed at the semi-permanent signals at the roadworks and at Milton Road West/Mountcastle Drive South and Portobello High Street/Brighton Place junctions to allow signals phasings to be altered to address traffic build ups from a central control point
- Temporary road closures of nearby residential streets in Craigentenny to prevent rat running by through traffic
- Temporary signs advising traffic to slow down to be erected in nearby residential streets
- Provision of temporary traffic signals at junction of Craigentenny Avenue and Portobello Road
- Temporary parking restrictions throughout the site and also on Brighton Place (near its junction with Portobello High Street) and Portobello Road (from the roundabout to the junction with Kekewich Avenue) to assist traffic flows
- Increased level of enforcement of existing parking restrictions on Portobello High Street