

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 20 JUNE 2006

A70 WELLTREES IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise the Committee of the current status of the A70 Welltrees Improvement Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 3 May 2005 the Committee noted the proposed scheme for the replacement of the bridge and realignment of the double bends at Welltrees on the A70 West of Muirkirk. The Committee also noted that the scheme would be jointly funded by East Ayrshire Council and Scottish Coal, under a Section 75 Agreement.
- 2.2 The geological investigations, reported to the Committee on 3 May 2005, ruled out the original line for the realignment due to the discovery of abandoned coal shafts under the proposed line. Extensive redesign work and further geological investigations were then required. The new line resulted in substantially increased costs for the whole project which were not anticipated when the original Section 75 Agreement was drawn up. Further negotiations with Scottish Coal were therefore necessary regarding the division of the respective contributions.

3. THE PRESENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Council and Scottish Coal are now close to agreement on the final funding and land transfer issues and a legal agreement has been drafted for consideration by both parties.
- 3.2 In the meantime, the design work has been completed and the scheme was put out to tender to 10 contactors on 30 May 2006, in anticipation of the funding, and other arrangements being settled.

4. PROGRAMME FOR THE WORKS

- 4.1 Tenders are due to be returned on 22 June 2006.
- 4.2 If the funding arrangements can be finalised timeously, it is anticipated that the work could start on site around the end of July. The contract duration has been set at 6 months.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Scottish Coal have now drafted a legal agreement, which deals with the actual mechanisms of the funding arrangements as per the Section 75 Agreement. This has been considered by East Ayrshire Roads and Legal Sections, minor amendments made, and submitted to Scottish Coal for their final approval.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** As the Scheme is currently out to competitive tender, costs cannot be publicly reported at this stage. Scottish Coal's contribution in cash, land, fencing and materials would amount to approx 50% of the overall cost. The remainder will require to be met by East Ayrshire Council.
- 6.2** Due to the uncertainty relating to the final costs of the scheme, the respective contributions from both Scottish Coal and East Ayrshire Council cannot be established with certainty. The approved capital programme for 2006/07 includes an allocation of £390,612 for the A70 Welltrees Improvement Scheme. Any additional cost above this allocation will have to be found from within existing departmental resources and if this is necessary, it will be subject to a future report.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The scheme will make a major contribution to the Council's strategy for reducing accidents in line with Government targets.

8. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** The A70 is one of the major accesses to Ayrshire and the main link from Muirkirk and the surrounding Community to Cumnock and beyond.

The replacement of the old bridge and dangerous double bends at Welltrees will improve safety, accessibility and social inclusion in line with key aims of the Community Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1** It is recommended that the Committee
- (i) Note the contents of this report.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services
6 June 2006
SG/SC/YK - FV

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the contents of this report please contact Sandy Gillatt on 01563 555734

Implementation Officer: Sandy Gillatt, Chief Engineer, Traffic & Transportation (Tel: 01563 555734)