

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 28 NOVEMBER 2006

BELLFIELD INTERCHANGE & QUEENS DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Report by the Acting Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the committee of current Scottish Executive feasibility work for capacity enhancements at Bellfield Interchange and for traffic signal improvement works on Queens Drive.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Bellfield Interchange suffers from congestion at peak periods. This congestion often leads to queues and delays on the A71, A735 (Queens Drive) and the A76 trunk road approaches. There can also be considerable queuing on the A77 southbound off ramp in the evening peak period which can sometimes result in queuing back on to the main southbound A77 traffic lanes.
- 2.2** The Bellfield Interchange and associated ramps are the responsibility of the Scottish Executive and are managed for them by Amey Highways.
- 2.3** The Council brought the congestion problems at Bellfield Interchange to the attention of the Scottish Office some years ago and has had a regular dialogue with the Scottish Executive and Amey Highways regarding traffic issues at the Interchange. Major reconstruction work on the Interchange was completed last year by Amey. At the same time, the Council also carried out a widening of Queens Drive to four lanes between the Bellfield Roundabout and Hurlford Road.
- 2.4** Amey Highways has carried out a further study to consider capacity enhancements for Bellfield interchange and has recently submitted a report to the Scottish Executive which recommends a preferred option of signalling the interchange. The study undertaken by Amey shows that a full signalisation of the interchange would significantly improve the capacity.
- 2.5** Amey has recommended to the Executive that the signalisation be incorporated in an early programme of works and are currently preparing a detailed design for the project. However, at this stage it is understood that the Executive has not yet committed funding for the project.

3. OTHER QUEENS DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

- 3.1** East Ayrshire Council has previously secured funding via a Section 75 Planning Agreement to replace the existing mini-roundabout at the Queens Drive/Hurlford Road junction with traffic signals. The Section 75 Agreement also provides for the installation of traffic signals at the Wellbeck Street/Lawson St/New Mill Road junction. This work is currently underway and will be completed in the current financial year.

3.2 Both Amey Highways and the Scottish Executive feel it would be advantageous to signalise the Hurlford Road junction and Bellfield Interchange at the same time. This would allow the signal operation at both junctions to be linked, the same signal supplier would be used to ensure compatibility of equipment and disruption to traffic would be kept to a minimum.

3.3 Some advance works were carried out for the signals at the Hurlford Road junction by the Roads Division last year during the widening of Queens Drive. Further ducting and preparatory work will be undertaken in the current financial year. However it is proposed that the installation of the traffic signals at the Hurlford Road junction is deferred until the 2007-08 financial year, to give more time for further discussions with the Scottish Executive regarding the co-ordination of the signalisation of the Interchange and the Hurlford Road junction.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Installation of traffic signals is permitted development under the Town and Country Planning Act General Development Order.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 75 funding has been provided for the installation of traffic signals at the two junctions currently controlled by mini-roundabouts on Queens Drive.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The proposals meet Local Transport Strategy policies to improve safety and improve accessibility to Kilmarnock town centre.

7. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The improvements will contribute to the Community Planning themes of Improving Community Safety and Improving Opportunities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the study undertaken by the Scottish Executive/Amey for further improvements to the Bellfield Interchange;
- (ii) agree to defer the installation of the traffic signals at the Queens Drive/Hurlford Road junction to give more time for the Scottish Executive to co-ordinate the works with signalisation of the Bellfield Interchange; and
- (iii) note that further civil engineering preparatory works at the Queens Drive/Hurlford Road junction will be undertaken in the current financial year.

Jim Kane

Acting Executive Director of Development and Property Services

14/11/06

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the contents of this report please contact Kerr Chalmers on 01563 555715

Implementation Officer: Kerr Chalmers